

STEPPING TO THE PLATE

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To Wide Range Of Questions
About His Disappointing Season

NOVEMBER 2009
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ChopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

MAN AT WORK

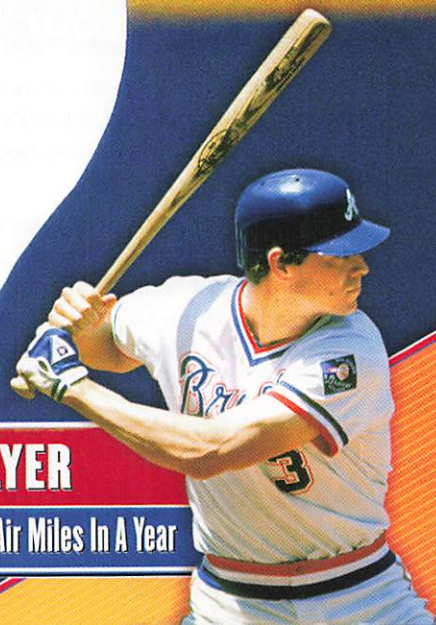
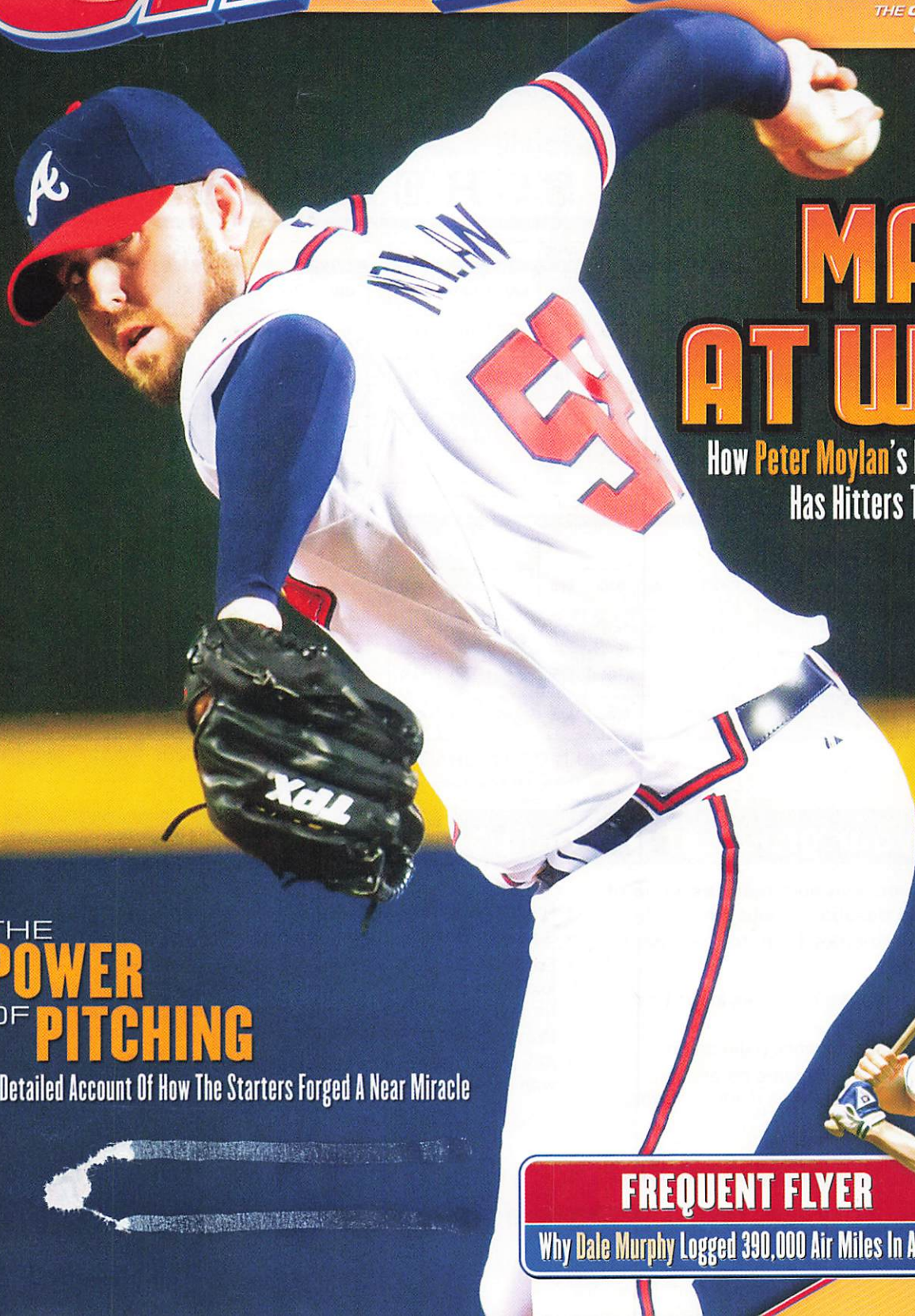
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Has Hitters Taking Cover

THE POWER OF PITCHING

A Detailed Account Of How The Starters Forged A Near Miracle

FREQUENT FLYER

Why Dale Murphy Logged 390,000 Air Miles In A Year





2010 SEASON SCHEDULE

APRIL							JUNE							AUGUST						
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		PHI Memorial Day												PHI						

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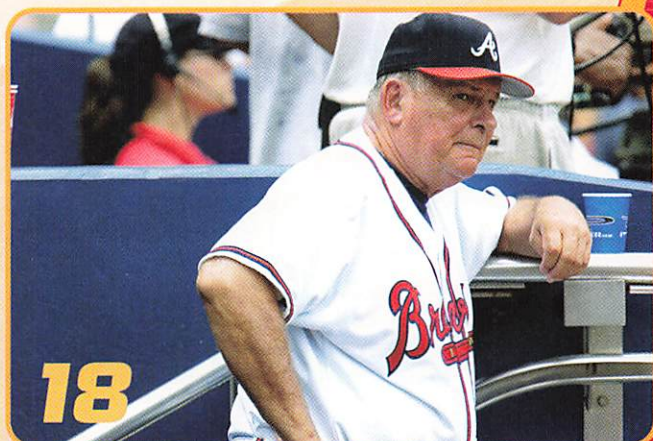
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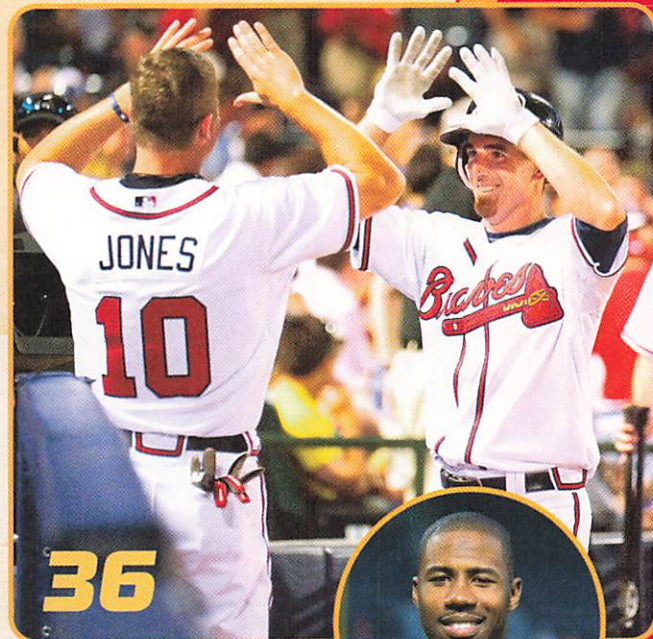
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PETER MOYLAN
Courtesy of the
Atlanta Braves

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ATLANTA BRAVES

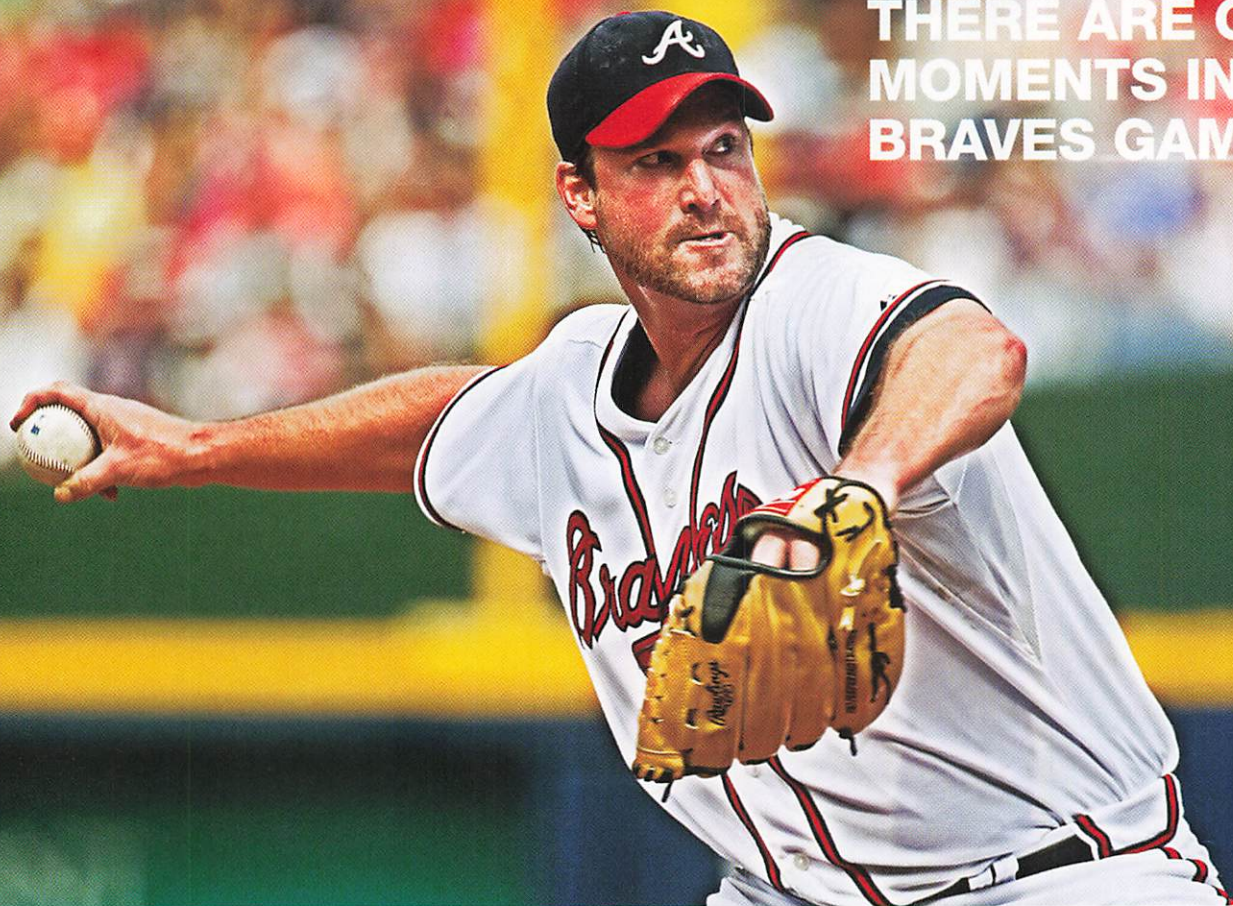
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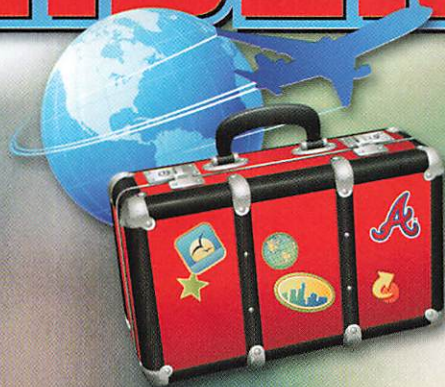
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DALE MURPHY LOGS 390,000 AIR MILES IN A YEAR,
CONVINCING 3 MILLION YOUNG BALLPLAYERS
TO PLEDGE: "I WON'T CHEAT"

THE CRUSADER

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



One of the most beloved Braves of all-time and a two-time National League MVP, Murphy received his usual hearty welcome when he returned to Turner Field July 17 for Greg Maddux's number retirement and induction into the Braves Hall of Fame.



If Dale Murphy thought his traveling days were behind him when he retired from baseball 16 years ago, he was greatly mistaken. This past year alone, Murphy accumulated an eye-popping 390,000 mileage points while spanning the globe for both business and pleasure.

According to a list of "high miles flyers" compiled in *Wired* magazine (Aug. 1999), that total would have put Murphy ahead of former Secretary of State Madelyn Albright (247,761) and only slightly behind Mark Moffett, an ecologist and photographer for *National Geographic Magazine* (400,000). It's pretty amazing company for Murphy, an Atlanta Braves icon who uses his celebrity to bolster such causes as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Little League, and the I Won't Cheat Foundation, his own anti-steroid and ethics crusade.

Asked why he takes to the road with such enthusiasm, Murphy joked, "Some guys will do anything for \$25,000." Then he added, "I'm just kidding! To be honest, I do make some paid appearances. I enjoy speaking, and there are companies who are willing to pay to hear what you have to say about how sports impacted your life. People like to hear about baseball and the lessons it brought to your life."

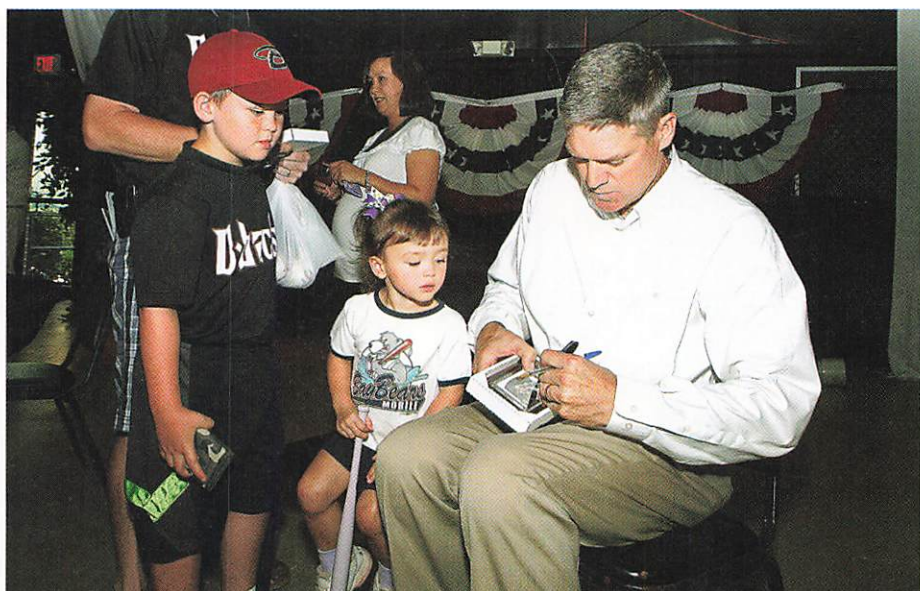
But many of Murphy's appearances are for organizations like the Boys and Girls Club of Greeneville (Tennessee) where he spoke at the Sept. 17 Champions Dinner in front of about 400 enthusiastic supporters. The event raised \$45,000, in large part due to Murphy's presence. In addition to his speech, Murphy spent about an hour prior to the dinner signing autographs, posing for pictures, and talking with attendees.

It was a labor of love for Murphy and a continuation of his desire to give back to baseball and the fans.

"Major League Baseball has always been a big supporter of the Boys & Girls Clubs, but I haven't done a lot with them," said Murphy. "I was glad to have the opportunity to go. It's fun to travel to places in the Southeast, because there are so many Braves fans who love to talk about the old days even though they weren't that great."

The "old days" might not have been great for the team, but Murphy is still revered in the organization and by its fans, and with good reason. He was the rare combination of great player and great guy.

A seven-time All-Star (1980-1987), winner of back-to-back National League MVP [1982, 1983], four-time Silver Slugger [1982-1985], and five Gold Gloves (1982-1986), Murphy was also named the 1985



During an appearance at a Mobile BayBears game, Murphy signs autographs for a couple of youngsters who weren't even born when he retired from playing after the 1993 season.

Lou Gehrig Award winner, exemplifying character and integrity on and off the field. He was the recipient of the 1988 Roberto Clemente Award for his sportsmanship, community involvement, and contributions to the team.

Murphy was, and still is, a solid citizen off the field, as well. Married to Nancy since 1979, the couple has eight children - seven sons and one daughter, ranging in age from 29 to 16 years old. They're also grandparents, with two grandsons and another grandchild expected next spring.

The Murphys make their home in idyllic

Alpine, Utah. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormon Church, the couple spoke about the joy of family at a Sept. 15 "fireside," an evening church meeting held in the Atlanta suburb of Roswell, where they lived when Murphy played for the Braves.

In fact that same weekend, they managed to combine business - Murphy's speech in Tennessee - with pleasure, the Roswell appearance and a visit with their son, Shawn, a member of the Miami Dolphins who were in Atlanta that weekend for an NFL game.

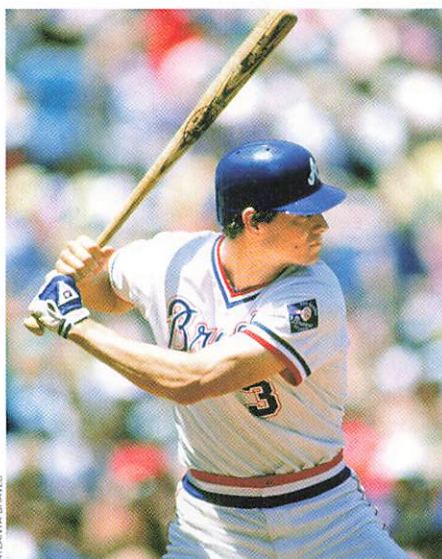
Nancy serves as Murphy's indispensable traveling secretary, maintaining his calendar, handling bookings and appointments, airline and hotel reservations, and making sure Murphy knows when and where to show up.

"Bill Acree (long-time Braves traveling secretary) had a tough enough time organizing me," Murphy said. "When someone wants me to appear, I always give them Nancy's e-mail address!"

Nancy estimated that Dale was on the road about 10 days each month, approximately 120 days a year.

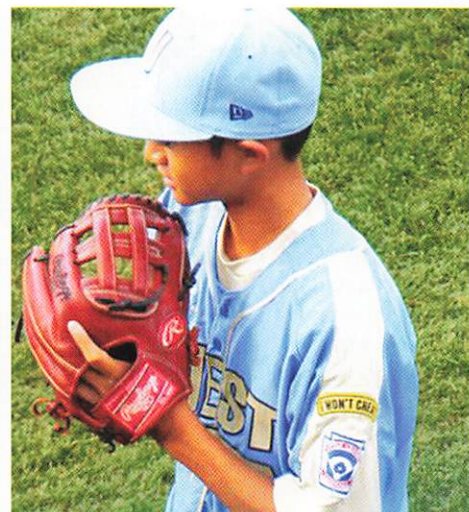
"Some months are busier and some years are busier," she said. "He almost always travels alone. I stay here to keep things running while he's gone."

Murphy said 2009 was an especially busy year for him. And a random glimpse at a portion of his schedule makes that point. In January, he was in Atlanta for the Braves 400 Club winter banquet. He also was a

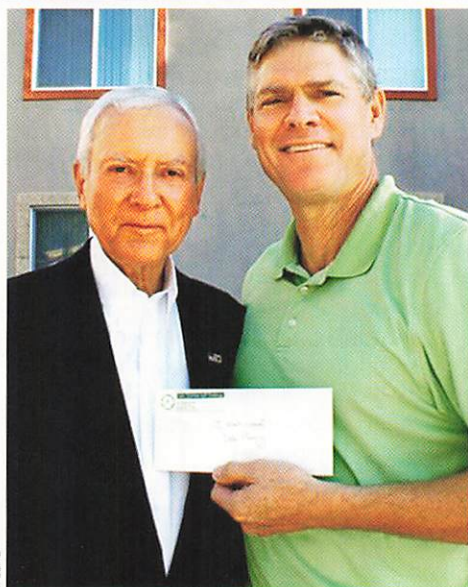


A member of the Braves Hall of Fame since 2000, Murphy has never generated enough support to be voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame - though that's a sore point with most Braves fans who know he was one of the game's most-dominant players in the 1980s.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Murphy makes regular visits to schools (L) where he delivers his "I Won't Cheat" message at assemblies. Some 2.5 million Little Leaguers wear a patch on their uniforms (R) to show they've taken the pledge. (Below, L) U.S. senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) presents Murphy a check for the I Won't Cheat Foundation, and (R) Tiffany Hsieh of Alpharetta and Malik Bell of Austell are recognized before a Braves game for their winning entries in the Braves' I Won't Cheat Foundation essay contest.



member of a panel discussion at a February ethics conference close to home at Brigham Young University in Utah. In March, he spent a week at Braves spring training in Orlando serving as a guest instructor.

On April 23, he was back in Utah, the main speaker at the Southern Utah University Thunderbird Club spring kickoff banquet, and on May 15, he was in Jacksonville, Fla., at a Jacksonville Suns game (Florida Marlins Double A) for an I Won't Cheat event at the ballpark.

Murphy was the special guest at Hank Aaron Stadium, home of the Mobile BayBears (Arizona Diamondbacks Double A), on June 6 at a game between the BayBears and the Mississippi Braves. And he's so popular the BayBears have already booked Murphy to be their featured guest on

Grand Slam School Night on May 14, 2010!

July was a whirlwind for Murphy, starting with a July 2 appearance at the West Tennessee Diamond Jaxx (Seattle Mariners Double A) game in Jackson, Tenn., followed on July 11 on the West Coast at the Triple-A All Star Game and FanFest held in Portland, Oregon, where he was born and raised.

The Portland appearance was a special thrill for Murphy, especially taking part in a round-table discussion with Boston Red Sox great Johnny Pesky and former New York Yankees third baseman Scott Brosius, who also hail from the Portland area.

Murphy was in Atlanta a week later, July 17, attending the Braves Hall of Fame luncheon and induction ceremony for Greg Maddux, and on July 23, Murphy made two separate appearances at Smokies Park,

home of the Tennessee Smokies (Chicago Cubs Double A). In the afternoon, he spoke in the stadium restaurant at a luncheon to benefit the United Way of Sevier County, where the ballpark is located, and that evening he was on hand to sign autographs for fans during the game between the Smokies and the Mississippi Braves.

The Murphys also managed to squeeze in a visit to Hawaii, where their son Taylor was playing in a summer college baseball league.

Many of Murphy's visits to minor league ballparks in the Southern League were arranged or facilitated by Mississippi Braves general manager Steve DeSalvo.

"I had so much fun visiting those parks," said Murphy. "I played ball in Jacksonville when I played on the Braves minor league

team in Savannah, so it was fun to go back there. The fans are great and really support their teams, and a lot of them are Braves fans too, so it was fun to meet them."

Though most of Murphy's speeches center on memories of his playing days, he said he wouldn't shy away from controversial subjects with a couple of stipulations: Do your homework and remember it's not about you.

"I remember getting involved in the campaign against the Georgia lottery when I was still playing in Atlanta," he said. "I did my research and did some interviews, but I knew it was because I was a ballplayer. Entertainers and athletes need to realize it's not that their opinion matters so much more, it's that they generate interest, bring the spotlight to the cause. And people listening to them need to remember to do their own homework and educate themselves."

In July 2006, Murphy made the conscious decision to tackle the contentious subject of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs in baseball when he formed the I Won't Cheat (IWC) Foundation. His message - that taking performance-enhancing drugs is cheating - gained traction, in part, because the investigations of alleged steroid use by Barry Bonds and other major leaguers came to a boil at the very time Bonds was chasing the all-time home run record.

Since then, Murphy has continued to speak to groups, from school assemblies to the Little League Organization to the Bill Clinton Global Initiative, about not just the damage steroids can do, but also the underlying issue of cheating in sports and in life. His message resonated with school administrators, coaches and universities.

"He's becoming a real voice in that arena," said Marty Haws, director of the IWC foundation.

Haws said the focus of the IWC Foundation has broadened as the need for ethics education became apparent. He said Murphy is scheduled to speak at the National Forum on Character Education in Washington, D.C., Oct. 29-31.

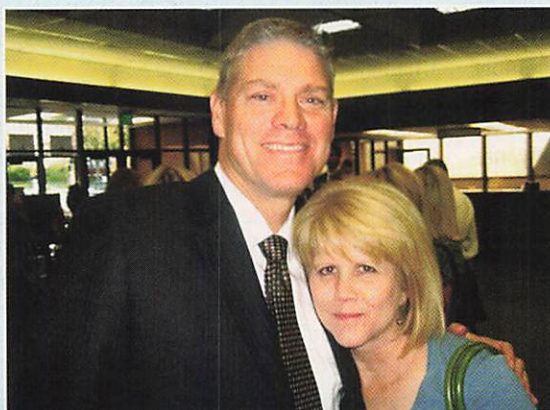
"Schools were telling us, 'It's good, but the focus (on steroids) is so narrow,'" he said. "Dale has been able to tailor the message from sports to school to life."

Over 2.5 million Little Leaguers have taken the "I Won't Cheat" pledge and wear the IWC patch on their uniforms, with half a million Pony Leaguers right behind them.

"We hear from leagues/teams/schools each week that are taking the IWC pledge," Haws said.

TEAM MURPHY

Nancy and Dale Murphy have eight children. We asked Nancy to give us a rundown on the activities and whereabouts of the family, and here's what she told us about each of them, beginning with the oldest.



Dale and Nancy Murphy, married since 1979, have eight children, including Jake (R) who will play football and possibly baseball at Brigham Young when he returns from a church mission to Australia.

Chad, 29, is married to Mindy, has a son Finn (age 2 1/2), and they are expecting a baby on March 14. Dale and I have the same birthday - Mar. 12 - so we're hoping he or she might come then! After graduating from Brigham Young University (BYU), Chad got his masters (in humanities) at the University of Chicago and is now working on his PhD in management and organization at Penn State. When he graduates, he hopes to teach in a university's business school.

Travis, 28, lives at home in Utah. He loves Miley Cyrus. He also loves Hilary Duff and Disneyworld! Though disabled, Travis served a two-year church mission to Japan.

Shawn, 27, was drafted by the Miami Dolphins in the fourth round in 2008. He's an offensive guard listed at 6-feet-4, 315 pounds. He is living in Ft. Lauderdale and spends every waking hour (almost) at the Dolphins' facility there. The longer he plays, the more amazed Dale and I are at the differences between the NFL and Major League Baseball. Let me put it this way... We are very glad Dale learned how to hit a ball rather than push people down all day! Shawn served a two-year church mission to Brazil.

Tyson, 24, is married to Val, and has a son, Max (14 months old). He just began his junior year at BYU in their animation department, one of the best in the country, and works part time at the Disney Studio in Salt Lake. Tyson served a two-year church mission to Portugal.

Taylor, 22, is a sophomore at Utah Valley University. He plays baseball (third base and first base). This will actually be his first year of college ball, because he just got back to the U.S. last September after he served a two-year church mission to Ukraine. He red-shirted last year, so he is really just starting out. No scouts yet - hopefully, sometime in the future.

Jake, 20, is serving a church mission in Sydney, Australia and will return in September of 2011. Before he left, he was widely recruited in football (wide receiver) and baseball (shortstop, third base). He signed with BYU to play football when he gets home, and if he can work it out time-wise, baseball, as well.

McKay, 18, is a senior at Lone Peak high school. He plays football (defensive and offensive line - starts both ways) and is being recruited by a few colleges. He will go on a mission in September of 2010. (The boys are able to go on missions when they turn 19, and most of them leave right at that time. McKay will turn 19 in September 2010).

Madison, 16, will be so thrilled to have her driver's license. She's a junior at Lone Peak High School (she is young for her grade - she actually skipped second grade). She plays volleyball. She didn't always love being the only girl, but she is at the age now where she really loves having so many older brothers. She's a doll.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

He estimates that approximately 500 schools from 50 to 75 school districts across the United States are involved in the IWC essay contest.

"Dale speaks most weeks about the foundation," said Haws, "and could speak more if he had time. We try to piggyback his engagements onto other events. He could do this full-time with all the requests we receive."

It's difficult to believe for Braves fans, but when Murphy speaks to a school assembly, most of the students have no idea he was a successful major league baseball player (his career ended in 1993). Murphy has bucked the odds of remaining relevant, linking his successful past to his equally successful present by putting himself out in the public eye, while retaining his uncanny self-awareness and self-deprecating sense of humor. He humorously illustrates the

concept of fleeting fame by telling this story at most of his personal appearances:

"I was at spring training a few years ago, and signing some autographs including one for a father and his young son," he recalled.

"The boy asked his dad who I was, and he explained that I had played for the Braves and was like Chipper Jones. The boy looked up at his father and asked, 'Do you think he could go into the clubhouse and get Chipper's autograph for me?'"

Murphy's motivation to travel, speak and sign autograph after autograph is born out of a desire to share what he's learned and the gratitude he has for the life he's lived, in large part because he played baseball. He founded the I Won't Cheat Foundation because he believed in what he had to say and wanted to make a difference. It's a passion his family shares.

"Life in and out of baseball has been like two different worlds for us, both of which have brought incredible blessings to our lives," said Nancy. "We miss baseball so much, but we love our life now and the time we have been able to spend through the years with our children. It has been a unique opportunity to have Dale home with us so much, and we all feel so lucky that life has turned out that way. Baseball has made that possible."

SEE MURPHY'S WORK ONLINE

I Won't Cheat Foundation:

iwontcheat.com

On Facebook.com:

Search: I Won't Cheat Foundation

At YouTube.com:

Search: Dale Murphy

DOMINICAN AMBASSADOR

"No haré trampa!" That's the message Jorge Sosa, who pitched for the Braves in 2005 and '06, is taking to the Dominican Republic this off-season.

"No haré trampa!" is Spanish for "I Won't Cheat," and Sosa hopes the refrain resonates with young people when he brings the message of the I Won't Cheat (IWC) Foundation to his native country, serving as the IWC ambassador in the foundation's first major international initiative.

It's a message coming from the heart for Sosa, who received a 50-game suspension after testing positive for amphetamines in August 2008 while he was in the Seattle Mariners minor league system. As a result of the suspension, Sosa was dogged by visa problems last off-season, effectively destroying his chances to make the major league roster for the Washington Nationals who signed him to a minor league contract during the winter.

Instead, Sosa spent most of the season with the Triple-A team in Syracuse, N.Y., before being called up in late August, and then designated for assignment on Sept. 9.

The 31-year-old righthander's disappointing season served as a catalyst for involvement with the IWC Foundation.

"He reached out to us," said Marty Haws, IWC Foundation director, who said Sosa's willingness to tell his story makes an impact foundation founder Dale Murphy



Former Braves pitcher Jorge Sosa, speaking to children at a school in Virginia, has joined Dale Murphy's cause and will carry the I Won't Cheat message to the Dominican Republic.

couldn't make. "Dale was clean his entire career," said Haws. "Sosa was, too, until he made one mistake. Now he wants to right the wrong."

Belinda Cermol, a friend and advisor to Sosa, helped arrange the contact between IWC and the pitcher, then set up speaking engagements for Sosa in front of school

assemblies and church and community youth groups in the Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland region.

"He has a great message," said Cermol. "His whole story is how he hit rock bottom because of one mistake. He felt what he was saying was in tune with the message that Dale has, and he's determined to share it."

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE



RIDE THAT WAVE RIGHT INTO 2010



ATLANTA BRAVES

Martin Prado (R) and Yunel Escobar came into their own as one of the best young doubleplay combinations in the league.

I STARTED WRITING for ChopTalk in 2005, right around the time the Braves made their last playoff appearance. (Boy, I sure hope there's not a connection there.) In each of the succeeding post-season-free seasons since, I've tried to look for some light at the end of the year. Let's be honest here - there have been times in the last few years when the glory days of the it '90s seemed a long way away.

But this year, we woke up one morning in mid-September and found ourselves in the midst of an honest-to-goodness pennant race. It was fun, wasn't it? Keeping an eye on the scoreboard while watching the game, figuring magic numbers, and working up scenarios. But unlike some of those last few division titles, which had a "how-did-they-pull-that-off?" feel to them, the 2009 run was different. Sure, it started suddenly and ended all too abruptly, but 2009 had the feel of a prelude rather than an ending. So, as we close the books on another season, once and for all, let's take a look back at the 2009 elements that have me watching the clock for spring training.

The rotation: The Braves entered the last few off-seasons with huge holes or question marks in the rotation. Not so this year. The team had four pitchers with double-figure wins for the first time since 2004. And while it's not a definite that they'll bring back everyone who started multiple games in

2009, a rotation comprised of some combination of Tim Hudson, Jair Jurrjens, Javier Vazquez, Tommy Hanson, Kenshin Kawakami and Derek Lowe should rank among the best in the league.

Strength up the middle: Both Yunel Escobar and Martin Prado blossomed this year, and came within one Escobar hit of posting dual .300-plus seasons. They're not yet in the class of the Phils' Jimmy Rollins and Chase Utley, but they're not that far off either.

The Adam LaRoche trade: In his 56 games with Atlanta, LaRoche hit .330 with 12 homers. That's the kind of production that keeps a team humming. And while LaRoche is at the end of his current contract, he's got Chipper Jones lobbying the Braves' brass to pony up a long-term deal.

Bobby Cox's retirement announcement: Cox's impending retirement at the end of the 2010 season means that we'll have an entire year to look back on all he's done. And judging by how well the team played after Cox announced he'd be hanging up the ballcap, you can bet that the 2010 squad will be busting their tails to put one more flag up on Turner Field's left-field wall.

The rise-up-ability: I'm stealing the "rise up" slogan from the NBA Hawks, but I'll give it back in just a moment. Late in the season, when everyone had written them off, the Braves stepped up and turned in

some of their most spectacular baseball in years, sweeping the division-leading Cardinals en route to a 15-2 run. It wasn't a flawless September by any means. Atlanta ran out of gas about five games from the finish. But the ability to stay focused and pumped at the highest level for two-plus weeks shouldn't be discounted.

The Chipper question: After posting a league-leading batting average in 2008, there was nowhere for Chipper to go but down. Still, he didn't need to take that quite so literally. He posted some of his ugliest numbers in many years, culminating with a miserable .221 batting average in September and October. So, why's that a reason to look forward? Because that swoon coincided with one of the Braves' best runs in years. Sure, a timely Chipper hit or two could have extended that, but the fact that Atlanta did so well without one of its top dogs at full strength bodes well for the immediate future.

The Francoeur trade: It's no secret that we were fans of Jeff Francoeur here at ChopTalk. We put him on our cover multiple times during his four years in Atlanta. But the fact that the Braves were willing to deal a fan favorite shows that their priority lies with the win-loss record, which - in the long run - is as it should be. Bidding farewell to Francoeur, John Smoltz and Tom Glavine this year was tough for many fans, but the payoff could be well worth the pain.

Obviously, not all the signs are positive. That famous 15-2 late-season run was bracketed by two ugly losing streaks, and the Braves had a disturbing tendency to lose too often to weaker teams. It's also entirely possible that the imminent Cox-retirement hoopla could work against the team, putting too much pressure on it to step up and send off Bobby with one last October.

Still, I've got to say I'm far more hopeful than negative, and I'm betting that the momentum of this stretch run doesn't dissipate over the winter, either for the Braves or for fans. After all, only three and a half months 'til pitchers and catchers report!

MATT DIAZ: HUMAN TARGET

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



IN 15 SEASONS playing in the majors, Garret Anderson has been hit by a pitch only eight times. Matt Diaz beat that in one painful month. From Aug. 17-Sept. 17, Diaz was hit nine times.

Ouch! Ouch x 9!

It was almost like Diaz had a big target painted on his body, and National League pitchers were trying to see who could get the most points. The scorecard read like an anatomy lesson: Left rib (twice)... left hand... left forearm... belt buckle... left thigh... right elbow... left foot... left shoulder.

It was quite a four-week period for the utility outfielder with the successful but unorthodox swing.

"I tell myself, 'It's just leather and string - how bad could it hurt?' even though it hurts like crazy sometimes," said Diaz of how he tries to convince himself there's no pain.

And despite his tirade at Marlins pitcher Tim Lincecum on Sept. 2, Diaz doesn't believe there was any ill intent behind any of the pitches.

"I was hitting the ball the other way, to right field, pretty well, so a lot of pitchers were trying to get me out by pitching me in," he said. "That probably led to my getting hit. It was just a crazy, coincidental month of getting beamed!"

At the end of the season, Diaz sat down in the video room at Turner Field to watch each of the offending pitches and offer his commentary on each.

- 1** Aug. 17: Max Scherzer, Diamondbacks. "This one probably hurt the worst out of all of them. Left rib, under the armpit. It was a 1-1 count, at about 95 miles per hour. Right off the rib, so that hurt. It didn't leave any mark right away, but the next couple of days it bruised up pretty well. It went from purple to black to yellow."
- 2** Aug. 19: Nelson Figueroa, Mets. "He gets me with what looks like a fastball off the left hand. It got me on the side of the hand, the fat though, so it just missed a bone."
- 3** Aug. 30: Ryan Madson, Phillies. "Theoretically, you would think Madson's pitch would hurt the worst,

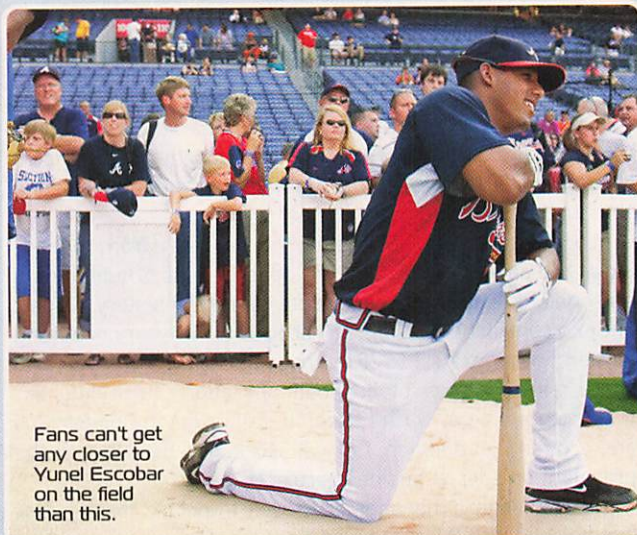
HOW DO
THEY DO
THAT?

but it just nicked my left forearm. He got the meat of it. I was getting lucky."

- 4** Aug. 31: Brian Sanches, Marlins. "This hits my belt buckle. I don't wear protective 'devices' because I'm an outfielder, so it's really nerve-wracking when it hits around the belt!"
- 5** Sept. 2: Tim Wood, Marlins. "Here's the one I got in trouble for. It hit the same spot, the left rib, that the Scherzer pitch hit (Aug. 17). I started hollering at him. It was a pretty big adrenaline rush because Ronny Paulino (Florida catcher) is a pretty big guy and he jumped up in front of me, telling me to go to first base, and I'm saying, 'You tell him to figure out where (the ball) is going!' and 'Get out of my way Ronny!'" Wood was out on the mound telling me he didn't mean to hit me and I said, 'I know you didn't mean to, but find a clue where it's going!' By that point, the benches had cleared. You can't really converse with someone on the pitcher's mound that loudly and not have the benches clear."
- 6** Sept. 13: Chris Carpenter, Cardinals. "This is a beautiful one. This is a happy hit by a pitcher, 0-2 off Chris Carpenter, who is having a great year, but then he hangs a curve ball right into my left thigh. It didn't really hurt. I was pretty happy just to take the base, 0-2!"
- 7** Sept. 13: Brad Thompson, Cardinals. "I got hit on the inside right elbow. I was swinging at a pitch that was two feet inside and checking my swing so my right elbow was exposed. It hit the funny bone, and things went numb for a few seconds."
- 8** Sept. 15: Pat Misch, Mets. "Okay, of all the 94-95 miles-per-hour pitches, this one hurt the worst. This was a breaking ball, going so slow, but it hit me square on the top of the left foot. (Laughing) I look like an uncoordinated joker hopping to first base. I'm trying to run, but I couldn't do it."
- 9** Sept. 17: Nelson Figueroa, Mets. "Here's Figueroa again. I didn't know he hit me twice! Left shoulder... that was a change-up, so that was fine."

Even though Diaz ranked eighth on the Braves in at-bats (371), he was plunked by pitches 13 times during the season to lead the team in that unenviable department.

LET FANS EXPERIENCE BP



Fans can't get any closer to Yonel Escobar on the field than this.

ALAMIA BRAYES

FANS LIKE to get close to the action. The Braves have found a way to make them feel like they're part of it.

The Braves Batting Practice Experience enables fans to be on the field to watch the players prepare for the game from directly behind the batting cage. Gus Eurtion, the Braves' executive director of marketing, explained why this promotion quickly became popular.

"They're right up close during batting practice," said Eurtion. "They get to see the players. The players wander over there every now and then for autographs, so that's a plus. They get to take pictures down on the field, coaches are mingling. So, they really get an up-close and personal experience that's from the field."

Fans that purchase the Braves Batting Practice Experience are escorted down to the field for a timeframe ranging from one hour to one hour and 15 minutes. They can roam an area behind the batting cage enclosed by a temporary, short white picket fence. It ranges to either side of the batting cage, so fans can get different perspectives. The Braves limit the participants to no more than 90 fans per game and have averaged 40 to 50. The controlled number means it's never too crowded, and everyone has excellent viewing and camera angles.

The BP Experience, new this past season, is offered for every home game except on Sunday when batting practice is optional for the team. It costs \$50 per person, with discounts available for large groups and season ticketholders. Since fans are on the field where there are balls and bats being used, they must sign a physical liability waiver, but Eurtion stressed the Braves take every precaution to keep the experience safe.

Eurtion said the Batting Practice Experience is great for members of youth baseball teams.

"We let them go up and watch what the players do on the field and how they prepare for the game. Not only while they're in the batting cage, but you get to see the fielding and you get to see the coaches run drills. They may see John Schuerholz and the GMs getting together, and the other team and some of their players."

- STEVE FALL

ONE MORE GO-ROUND FOR BOBBY

THE BRAVES announced Sept. 23 that they agreed to terms with **Bobby Cox** on a one-year contract extension through the 2010 season, and that the team's entire coaching staff will be brought back next year.

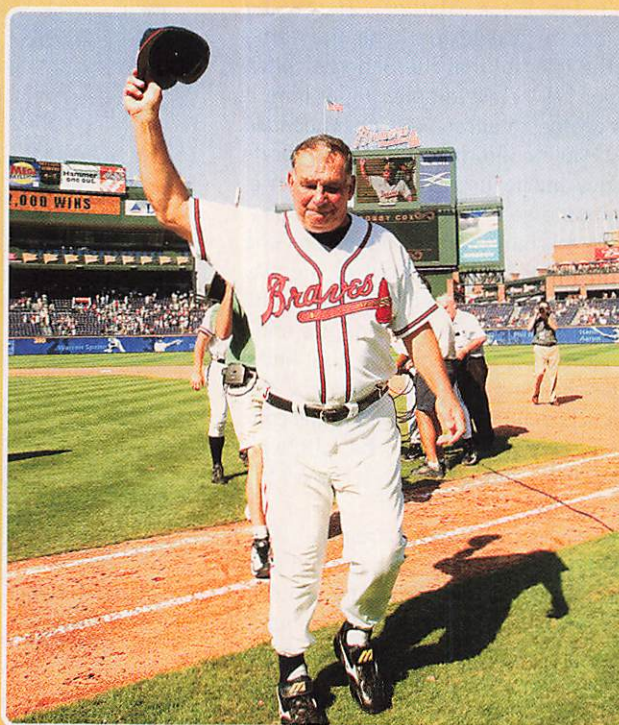
In addition, Cox announced that he will retire from managing at the conclusion of the 2010 season, thus bringing to an end one of the greatest managerial careers in history. As part of Cox's contract extension, he received a five-year consulting agreement, from 2011 to 2015, that calls for him to advise and consult in all areas of baseball operations, including the major league club, spring training, minor league operations and scouting. In addition, Cox will work with the office of the president on special business projects.

The winningest manager in Braves franchise history, Cox just finished his 28th season as a big-league manager and his 24th year at the Braves' helm (1978-81, 1990-present). He owns 2,413 career wins, placing him fourth on the all-time list and second among active managers. Cox has recorded 2,058 wins with the Braves and another 355 in four seasons (1982-85) with the Toronto Blue Jays. He and Hall of Famer **Joe McCarthy** are the only two managers in history with six 100-win seasons.

Cox, 68, has guided Atlanta to the game's best overall record since 1991 (1,752-1,258). Since then, the Braves have earned 14 division titles, five National League pennants and the 1995 World Series championship. Because he also won a division title in his last season managing Toronto (1985), Cox had a personal string of 15 consecutive first-place finishes,

which is unprecedented in professional sports.

Cox has 66 post-season wins – second all-time to the Dodgers' **Joe Torre** (77). He has earned four Manager of the Year awards from the Baseball Writers Association of America and an unprecedented eight Manager of the Year honors from the Sporting News.



Scenes like this are sure to take place often next season when Bobby Cox makes his last stop as Braves manager in each city.

STRONG FINISH

Jair Jurrjens struggled to the finish line in his rookie season of 2008, but that certainly wasn't the case this past season. The 23-year-old righthander was named the National League's Pitcher of the Month for September for posting a 4-1 record in five starts (36 innings) and a 1.25 ERA. He had 21 strikeouts and only 11 walks.

After a 3-1 loss to Cincinnati Sept. 5, Jurrjens went 4-0 with a 0.62 ERA in his next four starts. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, he joined **Greg Maddux** and **Tom Glavine** as the only Braves pitchers ever to post that low of an ERA while winning four straight starts during **Bobby Cox's** managerial tenure in Atlanta.

Jurrjens was 13-10, 3.68 as a rookie but just 3-4, 5.22 over the final two months. He

built up strength in the off-season, and it obviously paid off. He was 14-10 overall with a 2.60 ERA that was third-best in the league. Most impressively, he allowed two earned runs or less in 26 of 33 starts.

LOOKING AHEAD

Among the issues **Frank Wren** has to deal with this off-season is that he has six players eligible for free agency and another six that are eligible for arbitration. The free agents include **Rafael Soriano**, lefty **Mike Gonzalez** and **Adam LaRoche**. **Garret Anderson**, **Greg Norton** and **Vladimir Nunez** also are free agents. The players eligible for arbitration are **Peter Moylan**, **Kelly Johnson**, **Ryan Church**, **Matt Diaz**, **Buddy Carlyle** and **Boone Logan**.

ROAD WARRIORS

The Braves had the longest road winning streak of the season in the NL, 10 games between Sept. 10-13 and 21-27. Their perfect 6-0 road trip Sept. 21-27 included sweeps of the Mets and Nationals and was their first unbeaten trip of six or more games since June 2001. The 10-game road winning streak was only the fifth of that length in franchise history and the first since 1994.

CINCO DE VAZQUEZ

Javier Vazquez made 32 starts in 2009 and struck out five or more hitters in each of them. Since 1954, only three pitchers have recorded five or more strikeouts in more consecutive starts from the start of a



season, according to Stats Inc. They are **Randy Johnson** (35 starts for the 1999 Diamondbacks), former Braves coach **Bob Gibson** (34 for the 1970 Cardinals), and **Curt Schilling** (33 straight for the 2002 Diamondbacks).

Vazquez finished the season 15-10 with a 2.87 ERA. In the last 10 years, the only other Braves pitcher to finish with as many wins and as low an ERA was **Greg Maddux** (16-6, 2.62 in 2002).

SHORT HOPS

A Adam LaRoche had two home runs and two doubles in a 6-0 win over the Mets Sept. 15, making him the first Brave to have four extra-base hits in a game since he did it in his previous stint as a Brave on Aug. 30, 2006, against the Giants. He had three doubles and a triple in that game.

A The Braves beat the Mets, 7-3, Sept. 17 for their seventh straight victory. It was their first winning streak of that length since 2006 and put them 10 games over .500 for the first time since May 16, 2007. They didn't wait long for their next seven-game winning streak, reeling off another one Sept. 21-28.

A Yunel Escobar had a 46-game errorless streak snapped Sept. 28 when he bobbled a grounder against Florida.

A When **Chipper Jones** hit a home run Sept. 21, his 17th of the year, it was his first since Aug. 29.

A Kenshin Kawakami was moved to the bullpen when **Tim Hudson** was activated and started Sept. 1. On Sept. 21, Kawakami recorded the first save of his career with four innings of 1-hit, scoreless work in relief of **Derek Lowe** in an 11-3 win over the Mets. It was the first four-inning save by a Brave since **Mark Grant** in 1990.

A Garret Anderson got his 2,500th career hit Oct. 1, making him the 89th player in history to reach that level.

A Matt Diaz was unavailable for the last two games of the season because he had a minor surgical procedure performed after the Oct. 2 game to have a bat splinter removed from the base of his right thumb.

WE HAD A GREAT RUN; WE'RE VERY OPTIMISTIC

BY THE TIME Bobby (Cox) and I sat down, he had made up his mind that he only wanted to manage one more year. Not only that, but he wanted to make the announcement of the extension and his retirement at the same time. From his perspective, he needed to have that closure all at once.

He and (wife) Pam have things they want to do, but he still will be able to continue to be involved to the extent he wants to be. I told him I'll have a lot for him to do because of his ability to evaluate players and how he loves to stay in touch with the farm system. Having him available to go through our minor league system provides a wealth of knowledge for our minor league coaches and managers and gives them a chance to pick his brain.

I decided when we announced his plan to retire after next season that I'm not going to comment on what we'll be looking for in his replacement, or anything related to that, until Bobby manages his last game. We owe that to him, out of the respect we have for him, not to have it continually talked about until this time next year.

As far as when we're likely to have someone in place, I'd say sometime within 30 days after the finish of next season - by the general managers meetings in early November, because that's usually when things start happening.

Our organizational meetings take place in Florida in a few days. They're an exhilarating four to five days when we talk about a lot of things, from the standpoint of future planning, and really get excited about next year. They'll be

attended by our major league scouts, Bobby Cox, Roger McDowell, myself, Bruce Manno (assistant GM), John Coppolella (director of baseball administration), Kurt Kemp (director of player development) and Ronnie Richardson (assistant director of player development), and I think John (Schuerholz) is coming.

There are about 15 to 16 people. We try to go into these meetings very open-minded, with nothing set in concrete, so ideas can flow and we can decide what's best for the team.

When the team came home from Washington (Sept. 27), we felt, to a man, that we'd be in the post-season, at least in a playoff with Colorado for the wild card. The players felt that even if we were down two or three runs, whatever the situation, they knew they would come back, get a big hit, and put something together. That's what good teams do.

I think everyone felt we'd lose one game that last week, no matter how well we played. Then when we lost Tuesday night (5-4 to Florida, Sept. 29), we had to come back the next night and win, but we made mistakes and didn't score when we had the opportunities (another 5-4 loss to Florida). Colorado won the next afternoon and eliminated us.

Those two losses on Tuesday and Wednesday were like a kick in the stomach. That's the way the players felt. We had players banged up who couldn't play through the weekend, and it all kind of snowballed from there. The heart was taken out of a lot of guys. Our pitching remained good, but we just didn't generate any offense.

We had a great run. Until that first loss to the Marlins, we had the best record in baseball since June 28. That's three months when we played the game very well. We had 99 quality starts to lead the majors. There's a lot to be optimistic about.

I'M NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON WHAT WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR IN HIS REPLACEMENT... UNTIL BOBBY MANAGES HIS LAST GAME.

OFF THE FIELD

HUDDY'S SHOW

TIM HUDSON and his wife, **Kim**, and the Hudson Family Foundation will host their inaugural Hudson's Honky Tonk Benefit Weekend on Nov. 20-21, in Peachtree City, just south of Turner Field. The highlight of the weekend is a Country Music Spectacular featuring Blake Shelton and American Idol finalist Josh Gracin performing at the Fredrick Brown Jr. Amphitheater. Tickets are \$60 and are available at the amphitheater box office, online at ticketmaster.com, or by calling 1-800-745-3000.

VIP ticket packages with access to the entire weekend's festivities are also available and include a private VIP dinner party on Nov. 20 at the Flat Creek Country Club featuring celebrities, pro athletes, auctions, DJ, and open bar, as well as VIP seating to the concert, access to a private backstage after party, and logo or name recognition on all signage. VIP ticket packages are \$2,500 and \$5,000. For more information, call the Hudson Family Foundation at (404) 584-0095 or visit hudsonfamilyfoundation.com.



Kris Medlen (L) and Tommy Hanson visit a student at Wilson Creek Elementary School in Duluth Sept. 12 as a reward for the school's highest participation rate in the Braves All-Star Student Achievers Program.

ATLANTA BRAVES

BYE, BYE, BOOG

An opening was created on the Braves' broadcast team at season's end when **Jon Sciambi** departed Fox Sports South and SportSouth after a three-year stint to take a new gig with ESPN. Sciambi, known as "Boog" because of his physical likeness to former Baltimore Orioles great **Boog Powell**, will be the lead play-by-play announcer for Major League Baseball games on ESPN Radio and also will do some TV work for the network.

FLOOD RELIEF

The Atlanta Braves Foundation teamed with the Hudson Family Foundation, a non-profit children's charity founded by **Tim Hudson** and his wife, **Kim**, to host a book drive Oct. 2 benefiting Clarkdale Elementary, a Cobb County School severely impacted by the metro Atlanta floods. Hudson signed autographs in Monument Grove in exchange for a donation of five new children's books (with a minimum value of \$4 each) or \$20 for one autograph, or 10 new children's books or \$40 for two autographs. Donations went to the Clarkdale Elementary School Relief Fund.

FUN AT THE MUSEUM

Several promotions are scheduled at the Braves Museum & Hall of Fame during the off-season, starting with Trick or Treat Oct. 19-31. Children 13 and under visiting the museum during this period will receive a Braves Trick or Treat bag at the start of the Turner Field tour and then will get a special Braves treat at every stop along the tour. This applies to walk-up tours only.

On Nov. 14, all fans will receive free admission to the museum and a complimentary tour of Turner Field from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. A Toy for a Tour returns from Dec. 1-22. For three weeks, children 13 and under will receive a free tour of Turner Field for donating a free, unwrapped toy to the Braves Foundation. The foundation will donate all collected toys to children in need during the holiday season.

To celebrate the start of 2010, two visitors can tour the museum and Turner Field for less than the price of one during January. The regular adult admission is \$12, but during January 2010, two adult admissions are only \$10.

In order to promote the celebration of Black History Month in February, children

13 and under who read a book or an article about the Negro Leagues or the history of African Americans in professional baseball will receive a complimentary tour of Turner Field. Children can bring the book or article to the Braves museum entrance to receive free admission. The Braves' own African American website, braves.com/aaheritage, is a great place for children to start reading and learning. This promotion applies only to walk-up tours. And during the month of March, fans who donate new or gently-used baseball equipment, including youth gloves, cleats, aluminum bats, and catchers' gear, will receive 50 percent off adult admission to the museum and tours. All donated equipment will benefit the Marquis Grissom Baseball Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating youth.

GRANTED!

The Atlanta Braves Foundation awarded \$120,000 to the following local non-profit organizations prior to the Sept. 30 game: Arthritis Foundation of Georgia; Atlanta Community ToolBank; Caminar Latino;



Carver YMCA; East Lake Foundation; Field of Dreams Academy; Inspiring Kids Academy; Jack & Jill Late Stage Cancer Foundation; Latin American Association; L.E.A.D.; Moving in the Spirit; Project Linus; Study Hall; The Center for Working Families, Inc.; Women's Sports Foundation/GoGirlGo!; and Yes! Atlanta.

Additionally, the Braves announced multiple efforts to aid in local flood relief, including a \$25,000 donation from the Atlanta Braves Foundation to benefit local flood relief organizations.

Since its inception in 1992, the Atlanta Braves Foundation has provided support to thousands of metro Atlanta based organizations and has contributed more than \$3 million dollars in financial assistance to the community.

BALLS & STRIKES

A The Braves drew 2,373,631 fans to Turner Field for the season. That's 320,650 fewer than last year, a drop of close to 12 percent drop and their lowest total since 2004. The Braves ranked 15th in the majors, 10th in the NL, and third in the NL East and averaged 29,304 per game. On the road, they attracted an average of 31,612, eighth in the majors, sixth in the NL and second in the division.

A **Sid Bream** (1B, 1991-93) and **Bruce Benedict** (C, 1978-89) signed autographs in Fan Plaza before the Oct. 4 game, and **Gene Garber** (RHP, 1978-87) and **Otis Nixon** (OF, 1991-93, '99) signed Sept 20.

A Tennis phenom **Melanie Oudin**, a native of Marietta, Ga., who created a stir with her upsets at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, threw out the ceremonial first pitch Sept. 19 and also greeted fans and signed autographs before the game.

A Fans were able to chat live with **Tommy Hanson** on Sept. 30 on braves.com.

A The Braves selected "The Return" as their band of the year after competition among 40 bands during the season. The Braves will begin taking applications for next year's competition in January. For information, visit braves.com/bravesbands.

I'D BEEN PONDERING THIS FOR SIX OR SEVEN YEARS

I HAD TO MAKE THE DECISION to retire from managing at some point and have been flirting with it for six or seven years. The end of this season felt like the right time to go ahead and do it and, once it was announced, there's no going back. I wanted to announce it.

Now I'm looking ahead to next season, giving it our best shot one more year and putting everything into it. Then, life will go on.

It was important to me to have a role with the organization. I didn't ask for it, but they were nice enough to offer it. I'll still be asked my opinion within the organization.

I'm naturally looking forward to having more time with my family and to traveling a little bit. But the good thing is that I have an opportunity to go down to the minor leagues and see our guys - coaches, managers, players, the general managers and groundskeepers - and talk to them once in awhile.

I've always cherished my minor league days. The game of baseball is the same, wherever it's played. In that respect, it's going to be a lot of fun. I've visited the Rome and Mississippi parks, but not during the season. I haven't even visited Gwinnett yet, believe it or not.

It will be fun to come to Turner Field and watch a game from the stands. I'll be watching the games, not talking. I'll be more relaxed, that's for certain!

I don't think there were that many surprises with this team. The pitching, which looked good all spring, held up better than we could have hoped. We had a pretty good feel for how good it would be, and it certainly matched our expectations. And we were pleased to add to it when Tim Hudson came back. He only made it better.

There are good candidates for team MVP, but Martin Prado would be a good place to start. He sort of energized the team when he got a chance, and made a case to be the starting second baseman. He's full of energy and was a catalyst for a lot of wins.

Matt Diaz also had a great year, hitting well over .300 and producing. He made some great throws from the outfield.

Both Tommy Hanson and Jair Jurrjens did great. Tommy lived up to his billing, and Jair pitched better than last year - and that's saying something.

Javy Vazquez pitched the way I remember him when he was in Montreal. He was a guy who, when they came in to play us, I'd look at the rotation and cross my fingers that he pitched the day before. He was that good. If we could have scored more runs for him, you'd be talking about him in the Cy Young category. Both he and Jair got snake bit when it came to run support.

Chipper Jones said something about possibly retiring next year if he has the same type of season he had this year, but I say, "No way!" He's going to hit right around .300, hit 25 to 30 home runs and drive in 100 runs, and he'll be back the following year. He works too hard for this past year to be anything but a blip.

The last few weeks of the season, when we made a push for the wild card, gave us a glimpse of what this team is capable of when the pitching and hitting are working together. We have a good core of players.

In the days following the end of the season, the "think tank" guys got together in Orlando to meet with scouts, front office staff, minor league people, coaches and me to brainstorm ideas and come up with plans to tweak the team a little bit.

"I'M LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SEASON, GIVING IT OUR BEST SHOT ONE MORE YEAR AND PUTTING EVERYTHING INTO IT."

BOBBY COX WILL MANAGE ONE MORE SEASON
AND THEN BECOME A CONSULTANT

SETTING STAGE

WINNINGEST MANAGERS

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. CONNIE MACK | 3,731 (1894-96, 1901-50) |
| 2. JOHN MCGRAW | 2,763 (1899, 1901-32) |
| 3. TONY LA RUSSA | 2,552 (1979-2009) |
| 4. BOBBY COX | 2,413 (1978-85, 1990-2009) |

BY MARK BOWMAN
OF MLB.COM

Bobby Cox, who began his first stint as Braves manager in 1978 (facing page, L-R) and led the team to the World Series championship in 1995, agreed to manage again next season before leaving the dugout to become a consultant with the organization.

BOBBY COX HAS NEVER been one to seek great fanfare. But he's definitely going to experience it next year, as he enjoys the final season of his illustrious managerial career.

Wanting to end all speculation about his future, the Braves announced Sept. 23 that Cox will retire from his managerial position at the conclusion of the 2010 season and immediately enter into a five-year contract that will enable him to continue serving as a consultant with the organization.

"I'm thrilled and happy to be coming back next year," said Cox, who will turn 69 May 21. "The retirement, it's time in my life that I do that. I'm delighted that they're going to keep me involved for several years."

Cox, who ranks fourth on baseball's all-time list with 2,413 managerial victories, 2,058 with the Braves, said that he's delighted to know that he'll continue to be a part of the game once he inches into his retirement. As a consultant for the Braves, he'll have the

extension was made on Sept. 23, when Cox and Wren were disturbed by the fact that they were forced to answer questions about a disagreement that they had during spring training this year.

"In light of all the false information and speculation that has been out there the past two or three days, it's gotten to the point where we felt we really needed to nip it in the bud," Wren said.

Multiple major league sources revealed that Cox was so upset following a meeting that Wren had with him and his coaches that he contemplated driving back to Atlanta.

Always respectful, Cox denied that this event took place.

"You're going to have some disagreements, and we've had a few - nothing major that somebody is going to quit their job over," Cox said.

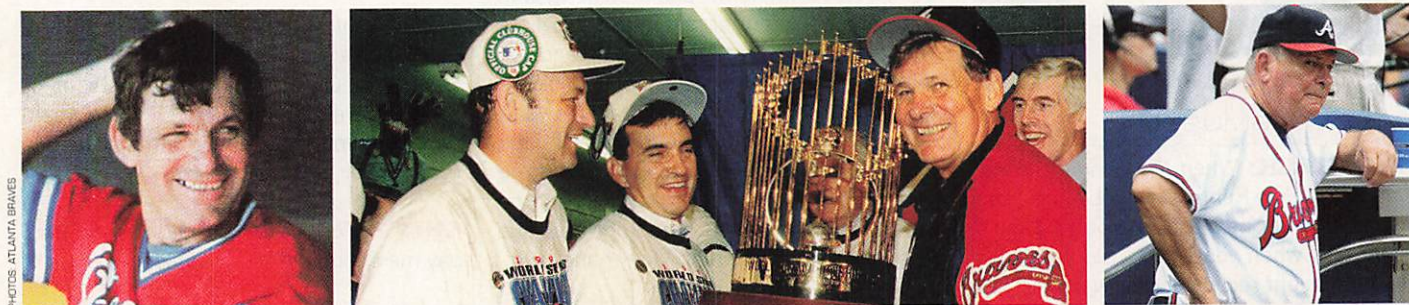
While it appeared that the Braves will miss the post-season for the fourth consecutive season, Cox was encouraged by the

bench as manager midway through the 1990 season. From 1991-2005, he led the Braves to an unprecedented 14 consecutive division titles, five National League pennants and the 1995 World Series championship.

"If I weren't announcing this right now, I'd be wanting to manage again somewhere," said Cox, who will be entering his 25th season as the Braves' manager next year. "But it's time to go ahead and say it. I don't think I'd ever give up the idea of managing, unless I could say, 'That's it,' and that's what I'm saying, is that it's it."

"I don't want to announce my retirement and have a day here and a day there. This gives me a chance to say goodbye to the writers, the clubhouse guys, the grounds crew guys that I've known forever, who have given us time on the field when they didn't have to with early workouts. Guys you meet in the game over 50 years are pretty precious."

Chipper Jones, who has known Cox since being selected by the Braves as the first



PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

opportunity to evaluate and assist both players and coaches at the major league and minor league levels.

Cox's farm in Adairsville, Ga., is located about five minutes from where the Class-A Rome Braves play. In addition, he'll still be in close proximity of Turner Field and Gwinnett Stadium, home of the Triple-A Gwinnett Braves.

"One of Bobby's greatest strengths is his relationship with his people," said general manager Frank Wren. "So, his presence within our organization - whether it's mentoring our managers in the minor leagues or evaluating talent - that's one of the things that he's done so well. He's always been a great evaluator."

The one-year extension as manager was agreed upon near the completion of the Sept. 15-20 homestand. But because Cox didn't want to deflect attention from the Sept. 18-20 series against the Phillies at Turner Field, he wanted to wait until Sept. 28, when the club was to begin the season's final homestand, to make the announcement.

The decision to expedite the news of the

progress the club made over the course of the past year under the direction of Wren, who rebuilt the rotation into one that is regarded among the game's best and also made key in-season acquisitions of center-fielder Nate McLouth and first baseman Adam LaRoche.

"Having him [Cox] back is great for us," Brian McCann said. "The team that we have going into next season is one that really has a chance to do great things. All of us in this clubhouse want him to be the one that calls the shots... If next year is going to be his last year, we definitely want to send him out on a good note and get this organization back to where it was when he got here."

Cox began his managerial career with the Braves in 1978 but was dismissed by owner Ted Turner after the 1981 season. After enjoying a four-year stint with the Toronto Blue Jays from 1982-85, he returned to Atlanta before the start of the 1986 season to serve as the Braves' general manager.

As the GM, Cox supervised the rebuilding of the farm system that provided him with an abundance of talent when he returned to the

overall pick in the 1990 draft, said that he was happy to hear that his long-time manager will return. But at the same time, he sounded as if he's not convinced that Cox will be coming back for just one more season.

"I'll believe it when I see it, when he walks away," Jones said. "He's been like my favorite granddad. He's been the one constant who has been here throughout the whole entire run... It would be culture shock for me to play for another guy."

Wanting to keep the attention on Cox, Wren said that he wasn't ready to address who might serve as the successor. But when it comes time to pick the Braves' next manager, the GM confirmed he'll definitely get a lot of input from the man who has handled the role so successfully over the course of the past 20 seasons.

"It's stressful," Cox said of the job. "It really is. But at the same time, it's the most fun you could possibly have. Being able to stay connected is the biggest thing for me. I'm not going to miss the uniform or anything. I'll be around it enough while being involved in the minor leagues a little bit and a little up here."

PLAYING PEPPER

CHIPPER JONES



ATLANTA BRAVES

Chipper dropped exactly 100 points off his .364 batting average that led the NL last year, and he failed to hit at least 20 home runs (18) for the first time in his 15-year career.

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: When the announcement was made that Bobby Cox will retire from managing after next season, you said you'll "believe it when you see it." Do you really think he might reconsider, or were you just saying that?

CHIPPER JONES: I was just saying that. I don't think he would have made the commitment to only manage one more year and accept another job with the organization if he wasn't serious. I think if he had said, "I'm going to manage one more year and then re-evaluate" that there would be no chance in Hades that he would retire. Bobby's a lifer, ultimately not a lifer manager. He'll be a big part of this organization, one way or the other. I think Frank Wren and John Schuerholz, the scouting department and all of them would be foolish not to include him in some of not only the developmental side of the minor leagues, but the personnel part of it on the big league level.

CT: When Bobby does retire as manager, who would you like to see replace him? Any thoughts on who they might consider?

CHIPPER: I do, but I think I'd better keep my mouth shut. I'm sure Frank would probably appreciate that, too! But those will be

tough shoes to fill. I don't see the next manager of the Braves coming from within, but I could be wrong. There are some guys that I have in mind and, if asked my opinion, which I hope I am, I will divulge it to Frank.

CT: You also said you might retire after next season if your performance doesn't improve from this year. Are you serious about that?

CHIPPER: (Nods) I am to the point in my career where I'm tired of the travel, tired of being away from home, and tired of my wife "shoveling" me out of bed in the morning! My boys are starting to play (ball), and I've already missed so much. I don't think it's fair to give up on the game after this year, after having a bad couple of months. I think I still have some good baseball left in me somewhere, but I refuse to go out and be mediocre. If I experience another year like this year, I will more than likely hang it up.

CT: And you'll give it the entire season, right? You wouldn't retire mid-season?

CHIPPER: No, I've committed to next year, and I'm going to go home and prepare like I always have and go into spring training ready, because I think that's what team leaders do. I'm fully focused on trying to send Bobby out in grand fashion.

CT: What sort of 2010 season will it take for you to come back for 2011?

CHIPPER: It wouldn't take a batting title year, just a year that was, first, healthy, secondly a productive year. I can't put any specific number on it - average, homers, RBIs - but just a productive one. This year, all the way around, has been my worst year in the big leagues, by far. I'm not happy with the way I swung the bat. I'm not happy with the way I played defense. But whenever I've had a year I thought was down, I've been motivated in the off-season to work at it and improve, and that's what I'll do this off-season.

CT: You've talked about coaching someday. Did this year help you develop understanding for players who might not be as naturally gifted as you?

CHIPPER: I've always tried to listen to what other players are feeling and what they want to accomplish. Then let's develop a plan, let's attack that particular area. I'm not going to try to make someone a 30 home run, 30 RBI guy when he's a top of the lineup or bottom of the lineup guy. It would be unfair for me, as a coach, to hold someone to the same standard I have as a player. If you are a good listener to major league hitters, you can be a good coach. The goal is to communicate how to fix the problem.

CT: You sat in the clubhouse with several young players during the season, obviously talking about hitting. You seem to enjoy helping develop young hitters. Which would appeal to you more, being a major league manager or a hitting coach?

CHIPPER: Hitting coach. You couldn't pay me enough to be a manager.

CT: So you won't be throwing your ball cap into the ring for the manager's job?

CHIPPER: (Laughs) No, no, no. I don't want the everyday stress of being a manager. The thing I enjoy most about this game is the craft of hitting. It's what I feel most comfortable talking about. I feel that I can communicate and see what's wrong within the first five or six swings. There's nothing better than sitting down with a young player, Brian McCann, Kelly Johnson or Martin Prado, and breaking down their swing, going into the cage, working on it, and going out on the field, watching them have success and have them come in the dugout and say, "I got it." That's pretty cool. That's my passion.

CT: You definitely see yourself in baseball in some capacity after your playing days are over and your children are older?

CHIPPER: I would probably take a hiatus for a few years after I retire, but I sort of put

myself in the same category as Bobby in that if I didn't have baseball in my life in some capacity, I would miss it. Being a hitting coach is a lot less pressurized than being a manager. You're only worrying about one phase of the game, and I feel as though I have a lot to offer and could help whatever hitters I get my hands on.

CT: You got off to a good start (.316 through the end of May), and then you had a poor June (.247) and never really got it going again after that. What happened? What went wrong, and why do you think you weren't able to recover the way you always have in the past? It was as if you could never get in a groove. Is that what it felt like?

CHIPPER: Yeah, it was a year where I really struggled with my mechanics. Right-

ever think, "What am I supposed to learn from this?"

CHIPPER: Yeah, actually. It's just a funny game. It has a way of knocking you back down to earth. I had a three-year stretch where I hit .330 or better, and you can't ask for anything better than that. That's what everyone shoots for. But it just... went away... there's no good way to explain it.

CT: Do you feel any of the frustration got into your head and kept you from being able to identify the problem?

CHIPPER: I am constantly analyzing things, but I don't think it's too much. I don't get caught up in (analyzing problems) the way I used to. It used to kill me, and now it doesn't. If I feel something or think I've

CHIPPER: We talked pretty frequently, but we do that anyway. We'll go over things, try things. He came to Houston, and we did a bunch of cage work there, but it really was a situation where you hit these "barrel" balls, you barrel it right at someone. You have a chance to have a really good night, the bases are loaded, and you barrel it into the gap, but some guy grabs it. Things tend to snowball downward just like they snowball upward. Last year if I didn't get two hits a game, I was ticked!

CT: Did you change to a lighter bat, and did that help at all?

CHIPPER: Yes! (Chuckles) I've pretty much tried everything. I've gone to a lighter bat. I've gone to a completely different bat. I tried Adam's (LaRoche) bat - that didn't work either. I've gone back to the bat I started with. It's a 35-inch, 34-ounce bat. I dropped down an ounce, but I'm back now. I don't feel like the ball comes off the bat with 33 ounces like it does at 34. That's just me. But if your mechanics aren't sound, especially if you have as many moving parts as I do, left-handed, it doesn't matter what size bat you're using.

CT: How would you characterize your problems at the plate? Was there anything in particular that gave you trouble that other teams took advantage of - a particular type of pitch or location?

CHIPPER: I'm having trouble centering the fastball. I've gotten so much stuff - changeups, curveballs, sliders - that I think I got in the habit of looking for it. It's made me slow on the heater. It's made me less aggressive to go out and hunt for the first 95-mile-an-hour heater and center it. But now, late in the season, and I'm up there hunting heaters, I'm still having trouble centering them. It goes back to what I was saying. Getting that fastball low and away early in the count that I should be driving up the gap or out of the park, and instead I'm fouling out. It's not because the bat is dragging (or) the bat speed is slowing down. It's as good as it always has been. I'm catching those pitches out front and fouling it straight back.

**I FELT AS HEALTHY ON OCTOBER 1
AS I HAVE IN 10 YEARS. THAT'S WHAT'S PUZZLING
TO ME FROM A PERFORMANCE STANDPOINT.**

handed, I've been able to piece things together and have a decent year (.291), but I only get 150 at-bats right-handed. That's one-third to a quarter of your season. Left-handed has been the one area where the mechanics haven't been in sync for any good length of time all year (.252). I can't explain it. I was hitting in the .330s and then went 0-for-21. Well at that point in the season, that's 25 to 30 points. I was hovering around .300, and I couldn't stop the free fall. I couldn't put any string of multi-hit games together to get back in that groove. Part of it was being a little off mechanically. Another part of it had to do with the way I was being pitched. On more than one occasion, I called my dad (Larry) and said, "Man, I am really getting pitched tough." It seemed like every strike was on the black. There were no 2-0, 3-1 heaters right down the middle. Mechanics was the biggest factor, though. I still see the ball fine. During 90 to 95 percent of the at-bats you have, you get a pitch that you are trained to take advantage of. I have done about as good a job at missing that pitch, whether I'm swinging through it or fouling it off, as anybody in major league baseball! I just haven't capitalized on hittable pitches.

identified something, I'll go in (the video room) and look at it, but I don't spend hours and hours in front of the video screen.

CT: Your dad has always been your personal hitting coach in the past and has been able to help you work through problems. Did he get involved this year?



Chipper says he hasn't lost bat speed but that his mechanics were off and he never was able to work out the problem, especially from the left side of the plate.

CT: When you look at the year you had in 2008 and the one that's just past, do you

CT: You're capable of seeing the mistakes in other players' swings. What about your own?

CHIPPER: I see it less. I have taken film from when I've hit a home run on a 95-mile-an-hour fastball and film when I swung through a 95-mile-an-hour fastball, and you can't see an inch of difference. What I look for is the bat path through the zone. When I start here [gestures to mid-shoulder] is it coming up through the zone, coming down through the zone, or staying level through the zone? Does the bat stay in the zone for two feet or six inches? I'm looking for all those things and, honestly, I cannot tell the difference. So that leads me to believe there's nothing wrong [mechanically], and I just have to keep plugging away. It's frustrating, but I'll go home this off-season, put on my weight, get stronger, and get to spring training. Next year is a new year. I might not be missing those balls. Last year I wasn't missing anything. It doesn't just disappear. I'm actually healthier this year than last year. I know my bat speed hasn't gone anywhere. I really don't have an explanation. I finally got to the point where I said I wasn't going to worry about it. I would just go out and play the game and have fun.

CT: What point did that happen?

CHIPPER: At the beginning to the middle of August, I just said, "You're probably not going to hit .300 unless you get really hot. You're not going to hit 30 homers. You're not going to drive in 100 runs. This team needs you to be a leader and play every day and take advantage of the opportunities you get when you get them."

CT: You've never shown a lot of emotion on the field. Do you still enjoy playing baseball?

CHIPPER: I love being in the clubhouse, being with my teammates. I love the game itself for three hours. Everything else? You can have it! I don't want to sound like I'm complaining, because there are so many great things that baseball has given me. But it's like anything. When you do it this much, for this long, it gets monotonous. I enjoy playing the game less now than I did 10 years ago, but I still love playing. If I could play every game at home [laughing] and just show up and play the game, I'd play forever, honestly. It's the living out of a suitcase for eight months out of

the year. It's the travel from time zone to time zone, no sleep, missing your wife and your four boys at a young age and all the things they go through. Sometimes I sit back and wonder if I wouldn't rather be doing those things as opposed to this.

CT: Besides dropping off 100 points in batting average from last year (.364), you also made an uncharacteristic number of errors, 22, the most you've made since 2000 (25) and the highest total for a third



Chipper led major league third basemen in errors (22), making more than he has in nearly a decade (25 in 2000), and calls his fielding "sickening."

baseman in the majors this year. Was there any correlation between your fielding struggles and your problems at the plate? Did one impact the other?

CHIPPER: It was sickening. I've always felt I was able to compartmentalize those two facets of my game, but I think I haven't done as good a job this year. I think the offensive struggles got to me at some point and maybe took away from some of my concentration on defense. But I'll tell you, the biggest problem I've had on defense this year is that I haven't moved my feet real well. I haven't gotten myself into position to make certain plays that I should have. The error total shouldn't be as high as it is. Out of the 22 errors, I would say 15 have been

legitimate errors. Last night [Sept. 30] was a perfect example. [Cameron Maybin's third-inning grounder skipped under Jones' glove, allowing two unearned runs to score in a 5-4 loss to Florida]. That was a play that has to be made, and it ended up costing us the game. Those are the ones that eat at me, the handful of really bad errors over the year. And it's because I didn't move my feet. That's one of those things, like I said if I have a burr under my saddle, I'm going to go home and work on it. It will be better next year.

CT: You had several injuries that caused you to miss a few games here and there, but you played in more games (143) than you have since 2003 and avoided going on the DL. How did you feel physically over the long haul, and did injuries play any major role in your sub-par performance? Did you feel like your body let you down?

CHIPPER: [Laughs] Actually, I feel like I let my body down! No, that's another thing that fed into my frustration. In years past, I had injuries and tried to play through them, sometimes your body doesn't allow you to do that. This year, I can't say that. I felt as healthy on October 1 as I have in 10 years. That's what's puzzling to me from a performance standpoint. I feel great - nothing hurting me whatsoever. My back kicks up on me once in a while in the morning, and Sharon has to roll me out of bed. But it works itself out, and I'm ready to play at 7 o'clock.

CT: Were you surprised by the way this team came together at the end of the season and made a run at a playoff spot?

CHIPPER: Nobody expected it, including me, and why should they, since we hadn't run off a 15-out-of-17 streak in four years. This team is headed in the right direction. I think everybody in here is very confident and positive. That's what I've been reiterating. The odds of coming from where we were to winning the wild card were really stacked against us. We gave it a heck of a run, and I'm proud of the guys for battering down the hatches and doing what it took to get into it. When we needed to, we played our best baseball at the biggest time of the year. We made a run at it. We came up a little short, but everybody in here will tell you that this month, September, gave us the confidence to know that when we come into

spring training next year, we cannot only contend for a playoff spot, we can contend to win the NL East, and ultimately to be a contender for a World Championship. We're only going as far as our pitching takes us, but our pitching is pretty sharp and you never know what pieces we might add in the off-season to hopefully make us a better ballclub.

CT: Speaking of next year's team, are you concerned or excited about the moves that may need to be made this off-season, subtractions that may be necessary in order to bring about the additions to bolster the lineup?

CHIPPER: It's going to be interesting and not a job I envy. The end of the bullpen will need to be addressed. Moylan has been lights out. There's no doubt he can handle the end of the game, but you still need guys to set up him or any other closer. Provided we don't sign either [Mike] Gonzalez or

bly why I wouldn't be a very good general manager!

CT: How much of a difference would it have made in the team's bottom line in wins if you had just an "average" season by your standards? Do you think the team would still be playing [have made the post-season)?

CHIPPER: Quite obviously I think it would have meant a great deal, but I think there are a couple of factors that would have saved us a few games here and there. My having a better year offensively would have been great, but who knows what would have happened if we had a full year with Tommy Hanson throwing a fireball. Prado has had an awesome year, probably our team MVP. Nobody was even depending on him coming out of spring training. [Yunel] Escobar has had a solid year, McCann too, but nobody has really had one of those years where you say, "Wow!" I

"I'M SURE A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE POINTING AT ME AND SAYING 'WHAT IF.' BUT THAT'S ANOTHER MOTIVATING FACTOR TO COME BACK LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE."

[Rafael] Soriano [both free agents], you can't take away one of those guys and not suffer. You have to replace them with shut-down guys. It's big, because those two guys won us a lot of ballgames this year, a lot of games. You're talking about a team that didn't win a one-run game on the road for an entire year [2008], and you get those guys and all of a sudden a one-run game on the road, we're really good this year. We need a specific type of bat, a right-handed bat, middle-of-the-lineup bat, corner outfield. My feeling about first base is that the Braves are saying that Freddie Freeman is going to be the first baseman of the future. I've got no problem with that. What they're also saying is that it's probably not going to be next year and there's no guarantee that it's going to be the year after that. We don't have a first baseman for next season, and you have the best first baseman - Adam LaRoche - that's going to be on the market this off-season, in house, now. I have no doubt that Freddie is going to be an outstanding major leaguer, but I'm thinking only about 2010. Frank Wren and John Schuerholz are paid to think three, four, and five years down the road. That's proba-

think you have to have one or two guys in your lineup have one of those "Wow" years. All these things factor in. I'm sure a lot of people are pointing at me and saying "what if." But that's another motivating factor to come back like a house on fire.

CT: Do you feel like you let the other guys down - especially in light of the motivational talk you gave everyone about "complacency" before the season-opener?

CHIPPER: No, because as long as the effort is there, I know that so much of this game is out of your control. From a statistical standpoint, anyone could say, "He let the team down."

CT: With John Smoltz gone, you had to serve as the team spokesman even more than ever. You were quoted in practically every story. Was that a distraction?

CHIPPER: No, I think I was kind of weaned into it. I've always been approached by the press - maybe not as much as

Smoltz or [Tom] Glavine, but once they were gone, a lot of that onus fell on me. I have a good relationship with most of the media in Atlanta. They feel comfortable coming up and talking to me. I'm open, I'm candid, and I'm going to speak my mind. But it's not a distraction.

CT: What are your plans for the off-season? What sort of training and nutrition program will you follow? Anything different than last year?

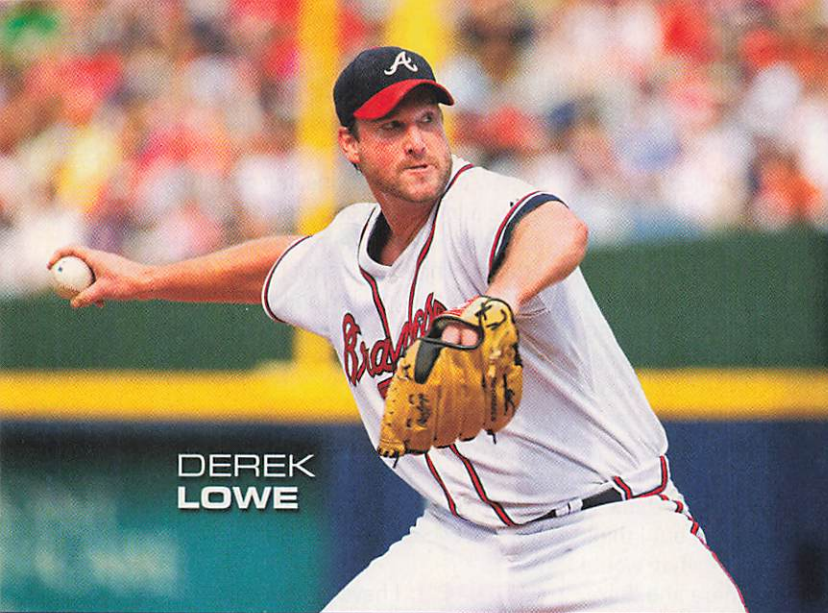
CHIPPER: I haven't changed my routine in 15 years.

CT: Well you did that diet thing a few years ago?

CHIPPER: Yeah, that didn't work! I went on the DL three times the year I went on that "diet thing," so I went back to eating Arby's and McDonalds! Anyway, I'll take a month off. I'll get into light lifting in November to try to mold the weight I put on. I'll hit it hard in December and January, hitting and working out, and then I'll come into spring training 230 pounds, just like I always do. Go through my aches and pains as I usually do in February and March, but if it ain't broke, I don't need to go out and fix it. I'm not going to sit here at 37 years old and suddenly think my off-season regimen needs to change.

CT: Do you have any big plans for the off-season?

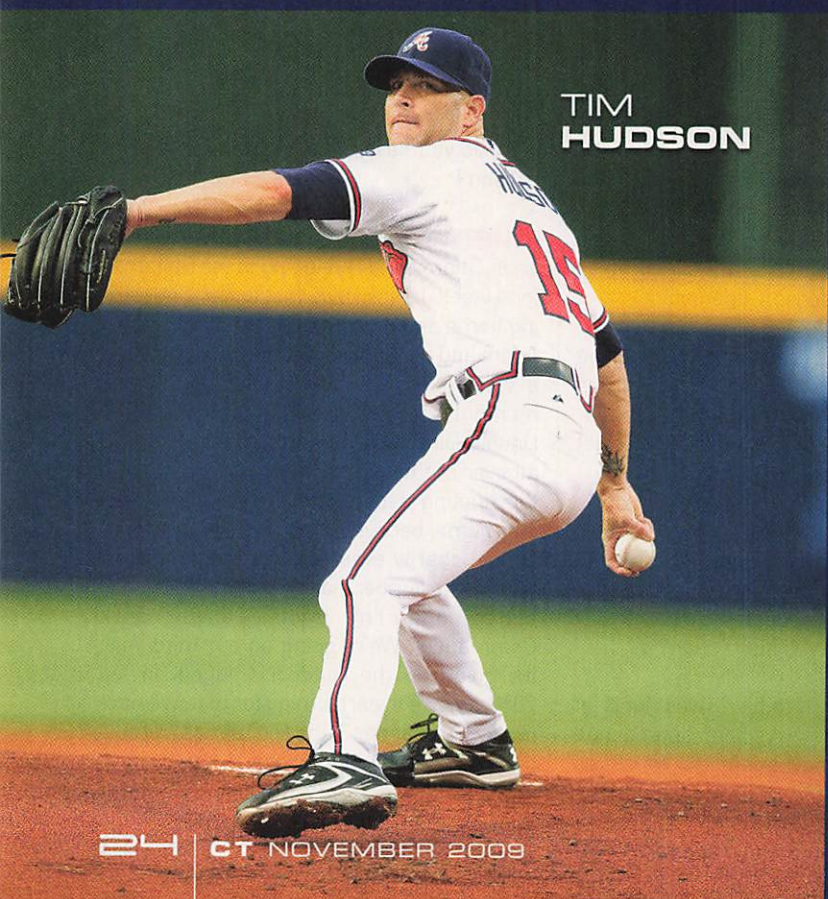
CHIPPER: On Monday after the season ends, Sharon and I are going to the Bahamas for a week. I think I owe that to her! I'm coming home and then heading out to the ranch Adam and I bought in Oklahoma. I'll be there a week. Come home for the rest of the month. I'll take Shea and Tristan out to the Double Dime Ranch at some point. They're all over me to get out there. They're all into the hunting aspect of it. Trey will probably stay home, because of school. We've got our annual charity event - our golf tournament held on November 1 and 2 will be bigger and better. And I'm excited about Buck Commander. We're going on our third year. It's going on the Outdoor Channel in fall 2010, and we'll start filming for that. We have Buck Commander 3, the DVD series, coming out in May or June next year.



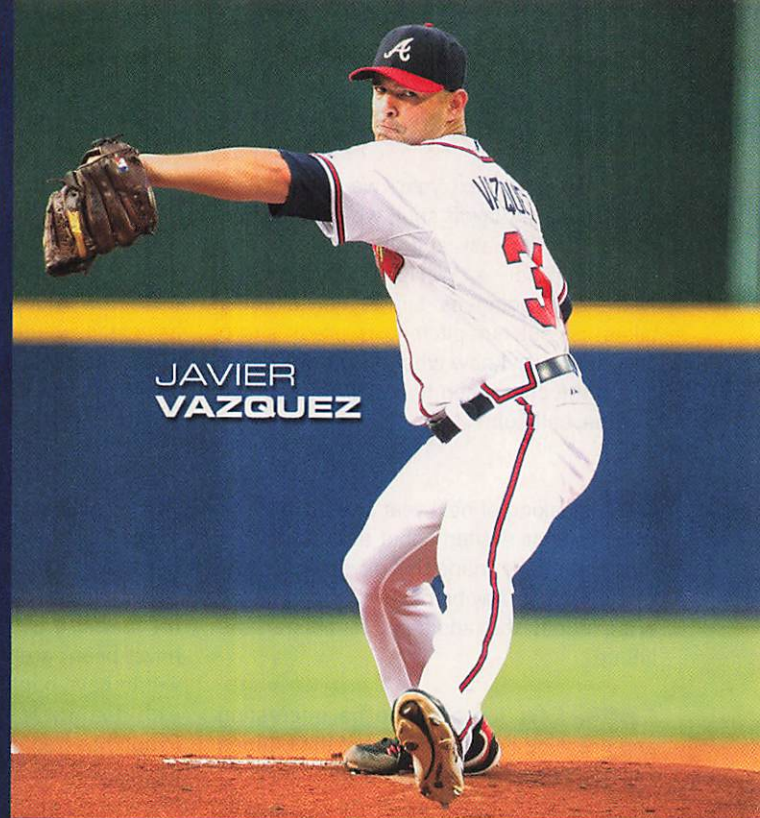
**DEREK
LOWE**



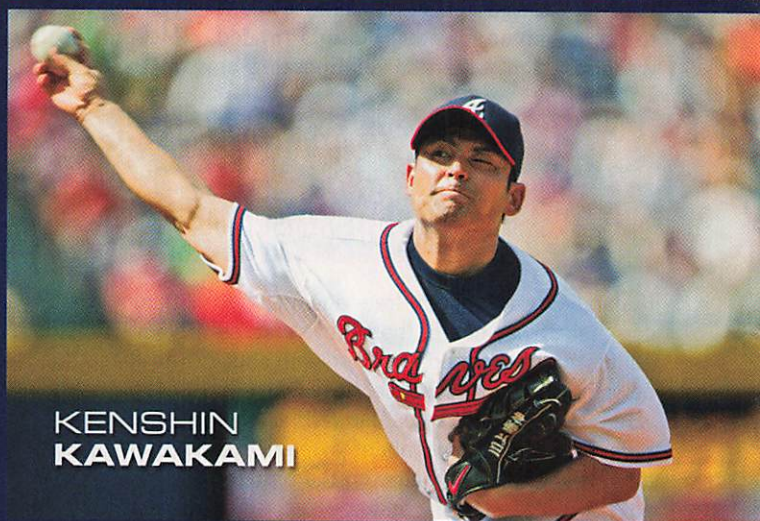
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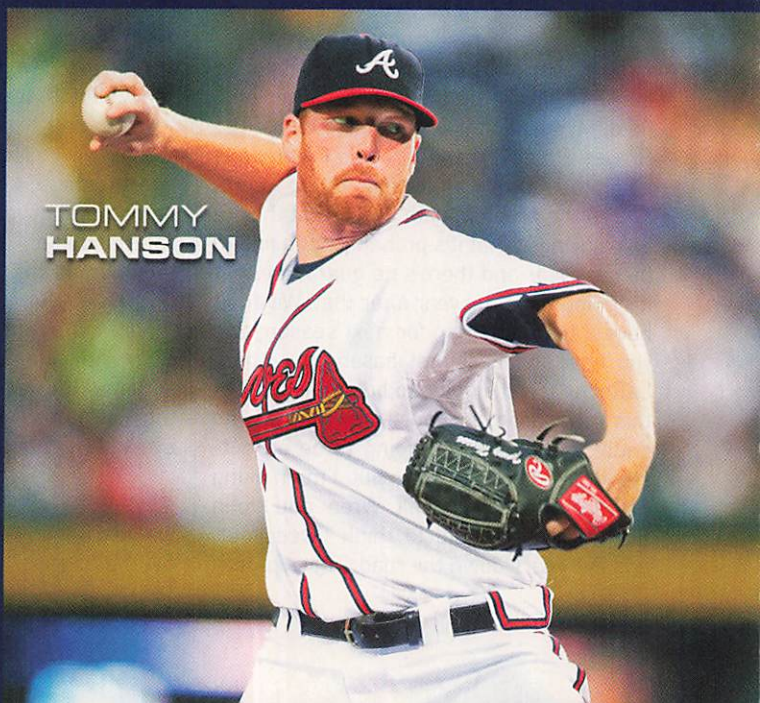
**TIM
HUDSON**



**JAVIER
VAZQUEZ**



**KENSHIN
KAWAKAMI**



**TOMMY
HANSON**

THE POWER OF PITCHING

Rotation Restores A Grand Tradition,
Forging A Near-Miracle Finish And Generating Optimism For The Future

BY JON COOPER

Saying goodbye can be painful.

It was difficult to bid farewell to longtime Braves legends and future Hall of Famers John Smoltz and Tom Glavine this year, but those painful goodbyes helped usher in what may be the new golden age of Braves starting pitching.

As a unit, Atlanta's rotation of Derek Lowe, Javier Vazquez, Jair Jurrjens, Tommy Hanson, Tim Hudson and Kenshin Kawakami finished among the major league leaders in most major statistical categories, including first with 99 quality starts (6 or more innings while allowing 3 or fewer earned runs).

"They're the best in the league, hands down," said reliever Mike Gonzalez. "I think they feed off each other. For example, Tommy may finish, and I'll see J.J. getting on him and telling him that he could

have done this better. J.J. goes out and throws eight shutout innings, and Javy comes in and tells him he could have done a little better. That's how they deal with each other. It's good competition. It's good fun, but you can see that they want to get it done."

"Look at the results we've had over the last couple of months," said Chipper Jones. "It's pretty awesome what these guys are doing, and the fact of the matter is, two of them [Jurrjens and Hanson] are 23 years old. That is enough to warrant some comparisons to the young Averys, the young Glavines, the young Smoltzes, [Kent] Merckers, people like that. They deserve it."

Here's a recap of some of the individual highlights and accomplishments compiled by each of the primary six starters Bobby Cox used this season.

DEREK LOWE

An off-season free agent that signed to be the ace of the staff, Lowe tied Vazquez for the team lead in victories with 15, his most wins in a season since 2006 and tied for fourth in the NL. But he is the first to call 2009 a personal disappointment, especially since he received a team-high 4.1 runs of support per game.

"I've been probably the weak link to the whole group, but it's a very talented group," he said.

Lowe worked 194 2/3 innings with a 4.57 ERA. Both are the second-worst of his

career as a regular starter that began in 2002. His only worse season was 2004 with Boston, when he admittedly put too much pressure on himself with free agency pending and finished 14-12, 5.42 in 182 2/3 innings.

But 2009 wasn't all bad. Lowe proved to be the horse the Braves expected, narrowly missing his sixth 200-inning season and making a major league high-tying 34 starts, the fourth time in five seasons he's done that. He also kept the ball down, inducing 28 groundball doubleplays, tied for third in the majors.

"The name of the game is to win," said the 36-year-old Lowe, who is signed through 2012. "Hopefully, next year I can turn it around and have a better year."

JAVIER VAZQUEZ

Remember the critics who questioned the acquisition of Javier Vazquez, believing Atlanta gave up too much in prospects Brent Lillibridge (batted .145 in 76 at-bats with the White Sox in '09) and Tyler Flowers (.297 with 15 home runs at Double A and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



I'M LEANING TOWARD LASIK SURGERY AGAIN

IT WAS A STRANGE YEAR for me, the way it started with my vision problems. It hasn't changed at all, but I'm going to sit down with a couple of eye doctors to see which route is the best for me. I'm leaning toward getting the surgery again.

I expect I'll take a couple of weeks off before I even start having that conversation, though. Contact lenses are still not an option, because since having the original Lasik surgery, my eyes are dry and the contacts just stick to my eyes.

If I decide to get the surgery, I'm not sure when I would have it done. It doesn't take a long time to recover. Sometimes it doesn't take longer than a week to know how successful the results have been, so I don't think that's something that needs to be done right away.

I'm not nervous about having the surgery again. It's not something I can control. The worst-case scenario is that I'll continue to wear glasses.

I wasn't more dinged up this season than before. The biggest physical challenge this season, by far, has been my eyes. It's been a season-long adjustment.

I can't really do anything without wearing glasses. I can't take batting practice without my glasses. They have to be clean. If it rains, I know they'll fog up and I can't catch with them, so there have been a lot of issues that cropped up.

It was hard for me this year to go behind the plate and block sliders in the dirt, because I couldn't get a good read on them without my glasses. There are probably five or six, or even more, plays that I missed that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been wearing glasses. I

had a couple of catcher's interference when I was trying to catch the ball out in front, because I couldn't trust myself behind the plate.

I definitely like not wearing glasses. I

never really got used to having glasses on my face when I hit. Every day was an adjustment.

Looking back, two weeks prior to the All-Star break, we were forming our team to win. Tommy Hanson coming up, Martin Prado, little things like that. It seemed like Martin was on base every time he came up, and he gave us a lot of chances to score runs.

I can't speak enough about what Tommy Hanson did. He had to live up to probably the most hype anyone's had to live up to, and he not only accomplished it, he surpassed everyone's expectations.

You think of a guy like him, that he'll have his ups and downs. He didn't have a down. He came in, knew he belonged. He's a great teammate. He's on the track of being in the same category as some of the great pitchers I've gotten to catch. He and Jair Jurrjens are 23 years old and are going to be here for a long, long time. It's going to be really bright around here for a long time.

The biggest disappointment was getting off to a slow start. We were playing catch up the rest of the way. We just ran out of season.

It goes back to what I talked about with forming our team to win. Getting Nate McLouth was important. Getting guys like that, winners, in this organization sets us up for our future. We know that we have an awesome rotation and a guy in the minor leagues, Jason Heyward, the number-one prospect in all of baseball, who has a chance to be as good as anyone on this team. The future is bright around here.

I was able to maintain my conditioning. I weigh 230 now and went into the season at 225. I was able to keep off the weight I took off, and I saw results from that. My knee didn't hurt at all this year, and I think dropping the 15 to 20 pounds helped me.

Triple A before three late-season at-bats with the White Sox)? About the only thing Vazquez silenced more thoroughly than the critics was opposing hitters.

Vazquez was ninth in the majors in ERA (2.87, sixth in the NL), fourth in strikeouts (238, second in the NL), sixth in strikeouts per nine innings (9.77), tied for fourth in fewest walks per nine innings (1.8), and sixth in strikeouts-to-walks ratio (5.41). He tied Lowe for the team lead in wins (15, tied for fourth in the NL), led the way in innings (219 1/3) and was second in quality starts (22). Only once did he not pitch into the sixth inning, and the Braves were comfortably ahead, 10-1, after five innings in that May 20 game.

"He's been everything that I thought he would be in a Braves' uniform, when I wished he was here when he was playing in Montreal," said Chipper Jones.

"He was dominant," agreed Brian McCann. "Every start out, he brought his 'A' game. Every year, he strikes out over 200 guys, he never gets hurt, you can count on him every fifth day. You can't find guys like that everywhere."

One place to start looking for Vazquez is the record books. In 2009, he became only the 10th pitcher in history to record 10 consecutive seasons of 10 wins and 150 strikeouts. He also had his third straight 200-strikeout season and the fifth of his career, fifth among active pitchers.

"I expect to do well," said the 33-year-old Vazquez, who is signed through 2010. "I've tried to be pretty consistent throughout my career, but obviously, this season is going better than the others."

"He makes it look so easy," said Jurrjens. "I learn a lot from just watching him pitch, the way he sets up the hitters to strike them out, and the work he does between his starts. It's an honor for me to be next to him and see him work out."

JAIR JURRJENS

Jurrjens laid the sophomore jinx to rest in his second full season in the majors, finishing with 14 wins. J.J. blew past the 200 innings mark (215) and cut more than a run off his 2008 ERA (2.60, down from 3.68), allowing two runs or fewer in 77 percent of his starts (26 of 34). His 24 quality starts led the team.

"Jair has progressed basically into a No. 1 pitcher," said Jones.

Perhaps the best evidence of that progress is the way Jurrjens performed in September. Last season, he tired down the stretch. But that experience and a rigorous

"I NEVER REALLY GOT USED TO HAVING GLASSES ON MY FACE WHEN I HIT. EVERY DAY WAS AN ADJUSTMENT."

off-season conditioning program helped him finish strong in 2009.

Jurrjens went 4-1 in September with a 1.25 ERA, while holding opponents to a .202 batting average. In the four starts leading up to his finale, Jurrjens was 4-0, posting a 0.62 ERA (2 earned runs in 29 innings), a feat that, according to Elias Sports Bureau, had been performed only twice in the Bobby Cox era: by Tom Glavine, who was 4-0 with a 0.62 ERA in 1998, and Greg Maddux, who went 4-0 with a 0.00 ERA in 2000.

"Javy and J.J. could easily be Cy Young candidates," said Lowe. "Any time you have a 2.00 ERA — J.J., 77 percent of his starts allowing two runs or less — he's just been phenomenal."

TOMMY HANSON

Hanson, who only turned 23 in August, confirmed in two-thirds of a season what had been suggested all last off-season — that he belongs in the majors.

"I feel comfortable out there," said Hanson, who averaged 7.6 strikeouts over his final five starts and pitched into the fifth inning or longer in 20 of 21 appearances (the exception was Aug. 28, when he was pulled after two innings following a long rain delay). "Every time I go out there, I feel confident and feel like I can keep our team in the game and try to get a win."

That confidence is well-founded. His major league debut came two months into the season (June 7), but Hanson managed to win 11 games, going 11-4 overall, with a 2.89 ERA. He won his first five starts (only the third Atlanta rookie to do that) and ranked in the top 10 among major league rookies in wins, ERA, strikeouts, winning percentage and opponents batting average.

He became the first NL rookie to beat the Yankees and Red Sox in consecutive starts, set an Atlanta single-game rookie record with 11 strikeouts (July 20 vs. San Francisco), and was only the second Braves pitcher since 1900 to win nine of his first 11 decisions.

"We knew Tommy Hanson was on the horizon, and he's arrived with a bang," declared Jones.

Hanson should receive some votes for NL Rookie of the Year — an award he'd probably be favored to win were it not for Philadelphia's J.A. Happ and Florida's Chris Coghlan — and with Jurrjens, he should supply a solid 1-2 punch at the top of the rotation for years to come.

"Those two guys are two of the best young pitchers in the game today," said

McCann. "There's a new wave of pitchers coming through. I'm just glad we have both those guys on our team."

TIM HUDSON

Hudson's contribution to the 2009 Braves could count as found money. Coming back from Tommy John surgery, the 34-year-old righthander gave the team seven solid starts, four of them quality starts, beginning Sept. 1 after he finished his minor league rehab time.

"Physically, I can't ask to be feeling any better," said Hudson, who said he wasn't quite at 100 percent effectiveness but would be by spring training. "It's great to see that I'm where I'm at now, but I'm really excited to see where I'm going to be come spring training."

He said the rotation's success was fun to watch, and, at the same time, gave him incentive to make it back.

"It reminded me of the days in Oakland, when we ran a guy out there every night who could shut down the other team," said Hudson, who is 56-39 in five seasons with Atlanta. "It made me really hungry to get back out there and start pitching again. I wanted to be a part of it. It's going to be exciting to see where this staff and the team is going to be next year."

The Braves hold an option on Hudson for 2010, though it remains to be seen whether or not they will pick it up.

KENSHIN KAWAKAMI

The odd man out when Hudson was activated, Kawakami, finished 7-10, but with a little luck and a little run support — he received a team-low 2.1 runs per start — would at least have been at .500.

After getting used to his new league, Kawakami showed he belonged in the major leagues. Beginning with his first start in May, he allowed three or fewer earned runs in 17 of 20 starts. He also showed he could hold his own against some of the game's premier pitchers, out-dueling the likes of Roy Halladay, Johan Santana and Josh Johnson.

Shoulder problems and Hudson's return changed Kawakami's role to that of long reliever, but with the off-season to recover and a year under his belt, he's eager to come back to Atlanta next season.

"Having pitched a full year will help me definitely next year," he said. "I'll have to concentrate on the hitters still, but I'll get to concentrate on my own pitching a little more, which should help." The 34-year-old righthander is signed through 2011.

LACK OF SUPPORT

As good as the starting pitching was in 2009, it would have been even better with just a little more run support. In fact, the difference between three runs of support per game and four was profound.

This chart shows the average runs per start each of the six primary starters got (while in the game), and their records when getting three runs or less (combined 20-44) vs. their records when getting four runs or more (combined 44-1).

Pitcher	Starts	Runs Per Start	Record 3 Runs/Less	Record 4 Runs/More
Lowe	34	4.1	3-9	12-1
Vazquez	32	3.9	5-10	10-0
Hanson	21	3.8	2-4	9-0
Jurrjens	34	3.1	4-10	10-0
Hudson	7	2.6	1-1	1-0
Kawakami	25	2.1	5-10	2-0

What's not evident from the chart are the following hard-luck stories:

- Kenshin Kawakami endured a stretch of nine straight starts with three or fewer runs of support, then another such streak over his final 10 starts.

- Jair Jurrjens went through three major support droughts. In the first, the Braves gave him two runs or less in four straight starts (April 17 through May 2 when he was 0-2 with two no-decisions). He then received two runs or less in four of five June starts (he was 0-4). Finally, Jurrjens received two runs or less in six of his final eight starts. Despite getting seven total runs, he still went 2-2 with two no-decisions.

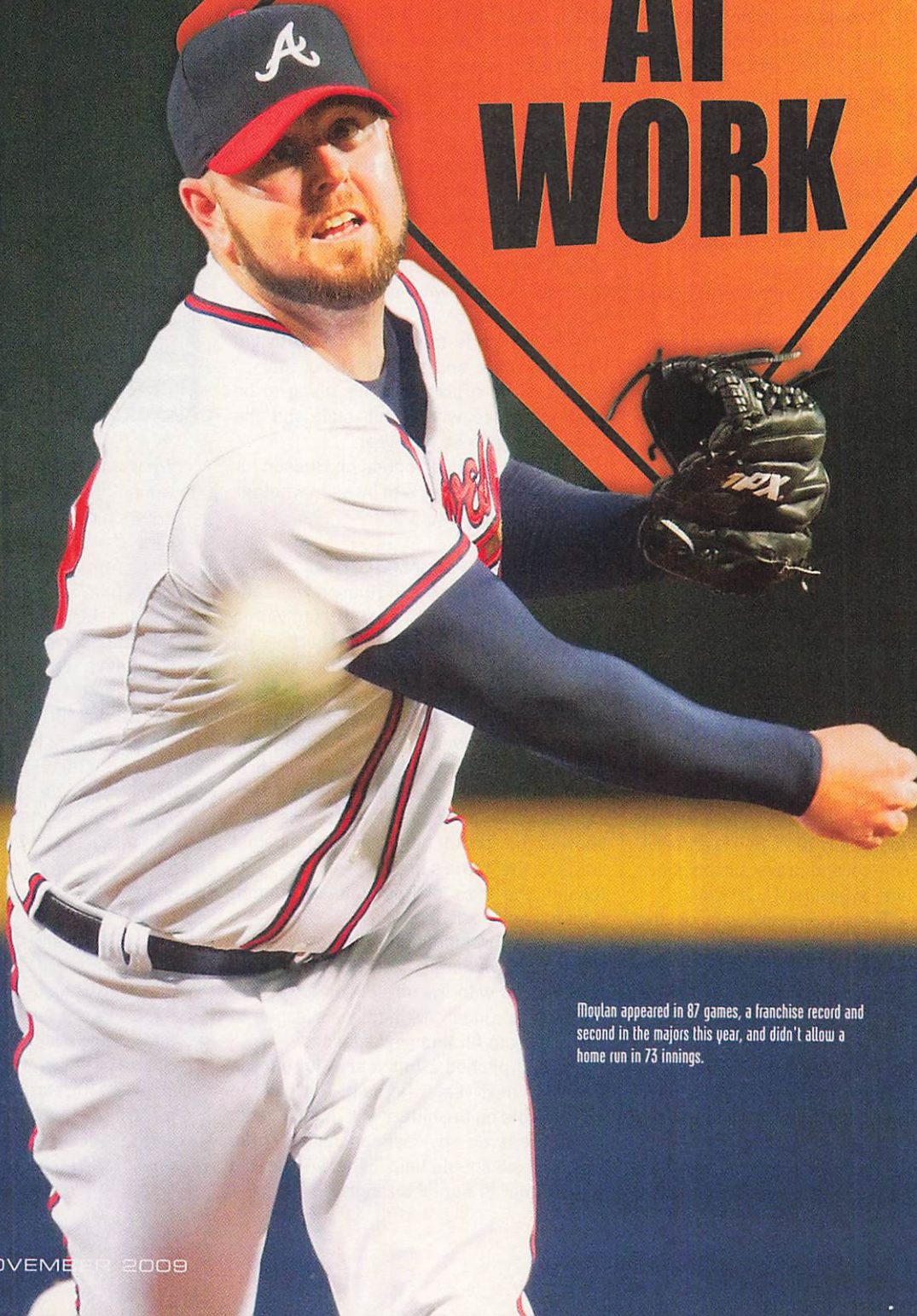
- Javy Vazquez suffered a stretch of 13 starts in 15 with three runs or less support (April 24 through July 7), including nine straight from May 25 through July 7.

- Tommy Hanson got a total of one run in his four losses, and two total runs in two other no-decisions.

- Even Derek Lowe, who got the best support on the staff, had to pitch through an offensive drought in a 12-start stretch, when he received three runs or fewer 11 times (May 18 through July 16).

- JC

Hitters Are Taking Cover
From The Thunder Of **Peter Moylan**,
Armed With A Case Of Vegemite



MAN AT WORK

Moylan appeared in 87 games, a franchise record and second in the majors this year, and didn't allow a home run in 73 innings.

There are a number of signs that Peter Moylan is sticking around for a while.

Since he has just three years of major league service, his contract is controlled by the Braves for the next three years; he's settled into a Buckhead apartment with his girlfriend, Mandy Coupel; and he's hooked on American TV shows like "Family Guy" and "Entourage."

But perhaps the leading indicator of Moylan's commitment to Atlanta is the amount of Vegemite he has stockpiled in his apartment.

"We have a case of it," Coupel said. "He eats Vegemite on toast every morning."

The chocolate-colored Australian paste, made from yeast extract, has been known to fool samplers with its salty, bitter (in

opponents' batting average. After the All-Star break, he was a remarkable 4-0 with a 1.00 ERA and .217 opponents' batting average.

Moylan was the only pitcher in the majors this year to go more than 17 appearances without allowing a home run. His 93 straight homerless appearances (dating to Mar. 30, 2008) is an Atlanta Braves record (previously John Smoltz, 76, in 2002-03). When he reached 75 games without giving up a home run this year (Sept. 2), he set a major league record for most homerless games to start a season (Baltimore's Chad Bradford, 2007).

This all comes after a 2008 season during which he made only seven appearances before Tommy John (elbow reconstruction) surgery in May terminated his season.

who had both known Moylan for years through national baseball clubs, clocked his sidearm fastball at 95 miles per hour in 2005 and were awestruck.

"What do we do with a guy who has been out of professional baseball for 10 years, with tattoos all over his arms, and earrings," said Phil Dale, the Braves' Eastern Rim scouting coordinator, who was competing for Moylan's services with his Red Sox counterpart, Jon Deeble (both have coached the Australian national baseball team).

"So, we brought him to Orlando [with the Australian team for the World Baseball Classic] where he continued to dominate some of the better hitters in the world. The next day, he was a Brave," Dale said.

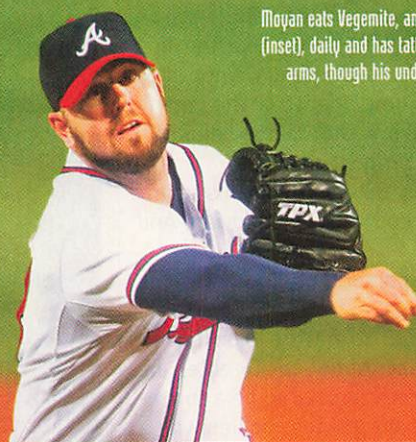
Moylan came to the U.S. in 2006 with a

"DOWN UNDER"

By Men At Work

...Buying bread from a man in Brussels
He was six-foot-four and full of muscles
I said, do you speak a my language?
He just smiled and gave me a Vegemite sandwich
And he said,

I come from a land Down Under
Where beer does flow and men chunder
Can't you hear, can't you hear the thunder?
You better run, you better take cover...



Moylan eats Vegemite, an Australian spread (inset), daily and has tattoos covering both arms, though his undershirt hides them when he pitches.

some opinions, unsavory) flavor. But for the 30-year-old Aussie relief pitcher, there's nothing like a little taste of home imported to his second home.

"He was so excited when the case arrived," Coupel said. "He brought a couple jars of it to the field and said he was going to make everyone try it."

Moylan may show up to the clubhouse with Vegemite, or he may show up with a John Smoltz "haircut" for good luck (Oct. '09 CT), but when he's pitching, the class clown from Down Under is nothing but dependable.

Moylan pitched in 87 games this year, second in the majors and breaking the franchise record (previously Chris Reitsma, 84 in 2004). He's the only pitcher in club history to make 80 appearances in more than one season, and he hasn't given up a home run since Opening Day 2008 against the Nationals (Ryan Zimmerman).

He finished 6-2 with a 2.84 ERA and .245

"He came back a few weeks earlier than the norm [after surgery], and he's been on a good progression," Frank Wren said about Moylan's performance this year. "Since the All-Star break, we've seen the consistency and quality of the old Peter Moylan - like when he was absolutely dominant in 2007."

Moylan wasn't always so confident about his baseball future. When he was signed by the Braves as a minor league free agent in March 2006, it had been eight years since he was released by the Minnesota Twins, where he played in the deepest rung of their farm system at the rookie-level Gulf Coast League in 1996 and '97. After that, he returned to club teams in Australia and had a short pitching stint in Taiwan.

But following his second back surgery in as many years, in 2003, he started throwing sidearm, which attracted the attention of a couple of major league scouts. The scouts,

suitcase packed for 10 days and stayed for seven months. Even after he signed with the Braves, he figured if professional baseball didn't work out, he would go right back to selling glass vials and cardboard packaging for the pharmaceutical company where he'd worked since the end of his Twins contract. (Not a bad job, he insisted - his pharmaceutical boss was Geoff Pearce, now president of the Australian Baseball Federation, and he made one-quarter of his current salary and had a company car and expense account.)

That year - during which Moylan was called up from Triple-A Richmond four times - was the start of a second chance that ballplayers rarely receive. And as far as Moylan is concerned, it's all because of some bad weather in Philadelphia.

"There were two doubleheaders in a row

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

[at Philadelphia followed by another three days later in New York] because of a rainout," Moylan said. "I had a flight booked [to Australia] for September 5, and September 3, I got called up. So for my whole career, I have a rainout to thank. I am 100 percent certain I wouldn't be where I am today without the rainout."

Despite the fortuitous weather, Moylan now says he struggled in 2006.

"That year was brutal," he said. "And even though I was 27, and I wasn't a naïve, young kid from Triple-A, I walk into the clubhouse and there's Andruw Jones, Chipper Jones, Skipper (Bobby Cox), and my pitching coach is Roger McDowell. All those superstars. And I've got one of those personalities where you either like it or freakin' hate it. That didn't rub so well with the guys on the team."

Moylan said veteran reliever Mike Remlinger took him aside that season to explain some of the intricacies of being a major league player - off the field.

"He told me about things like the bus from the hotel," Moylan said. "When they give you the bus time, that's just the time to go down and take a cab [to the ballpark]. You don't actually ride the bus."

He said it took '06 and '07 for his teammates to get to know the real Moylan. And who is that?

"Ninety-nine percent of the time," he said, "I'm hilarious."

Moylan went on to have a blockbuster 2007, when, according to Deeble, he "became a pitcher; he used to be a thrower." He led all major league rookies with a 1.80 ERA, .208 opponents' batting average and 80 games. That year, when the Braves were in New York, Moylan's father - who watches all his son's games on MLB.com - visited from western Australia. Moylan took him out for a New York steak dinner.

"Skipper [Cox] and Roger [McDowell] were at the same steak house," he said. "And my dad was speechless. I've never, ever seen my dad speechless."

This spring, Moylan said he wanted to prove that 2007 wasn't a fluke. After spending most of the 2008 season recovering from surgery (often rehabbing in a facility among "60-year-old women with hip replacements"), there was some trepidation about his quick return in 2009.

"Eleven months after surgery is early," McDowell said. "There was some inconsistency at first, from not facing hitters competitively for so long."

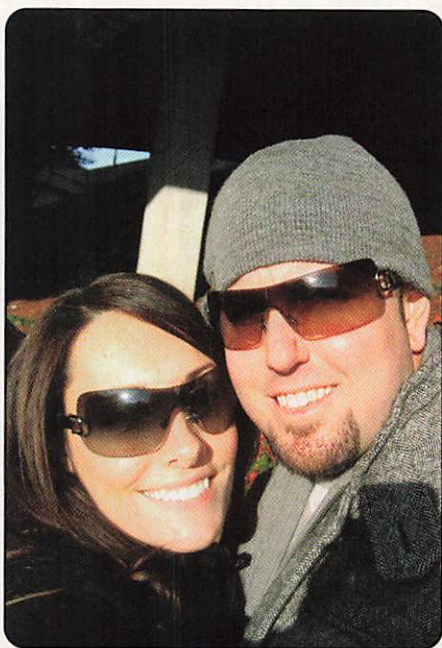
But Moylan surprised everyone at spring training. Not only was the old arm on its way back, but Moylan even learned a new

pitch. The Braves asked their one-time record holder for saves, Gene Garber (1978-87) to work with Moylan on the changeup that he used in the '80s.

"Even though I didn't throw submarine style like he does, the idea was that maybe he could incorporate the changeup into his repertoire to give him another weapon against left-handed hitters," Garber said. "He picked it up immediately. To throw as hard as he does is unbelievable."

Garber said for Moylan's role, typically in the seventh or eighth inning, he won't likely deviate from an already successful pitch, but having the new one will make him a more effective pitcher in the future.

Garber said he was also impressed with



Moylan, who turns 31 Dec. 2, and his girlfriend, Mandy Coupel, will spend three months of the off-season in his homeland of Australia, where he'll visit his two young daughters.

Moylan's tremendous competitiveness and desire to help the team, however he can.

"He wants the ball," Garber said. "No matter the situation, he wants to get the ball and get out there. When guys aren't scared and are willing to take the ball, they are well-liked - not just by the front office, but by teammates."

Indeed, Moylan said he feels like part of the team now and enjoys every aspect of it - whether it's helping a starting pitcher out of a jam or joking around in the clubhouse. He joined his teammates for a paintball excursion on a free day in Washington, they sometimes share a round of golf (Moylan recently won a closest-to-the-pin competition), and

the pitchers go out for bullpen dinners.

"The team gels very well," he said. "Next year we'll be an even better team."

There's no question that the team and management have warmed to Moylan's personality. Wren said Moylan is unique - in a good way.

"He brings a dynamic to the team that everyone loves," he said. "I don't know that I've ever seen him have a bad day."

Coupel, 28, a former professional singer (Aug. '09 CT), said Moylan's demeanor changed after he pitched in spring training and realized he could still, in fact, pitch.

"He's been the happiest person in the whole world," she said. "He loves the team and the travel and the boy time. Every day I ask him, 'How does your arm feel today?' and every day it feels perfect. He could not be happier."

Sitting in the dugout at Nationals Park during the Braves' last trip to Washington this season, Moylan shows off his tattoos to a visitor. His left arm is a full tattoo sleeve, and his right arm isn't far behind. The names of his two daughters - Montana, who just turned 9, and Matisse, 2 - are tattooed on his inner forearms. After he played in Taiwan, he got a tattoo inside his right bicep that says, in Mandarin Chinese, "Accomplish all without fear." Then there's the Tasmanian Devil on his calf that he got when he was younger (along with the defunct earrings and a tongue piercing).

Thanks to the tattoos (which are covered when he plays by a tight blue undershirt), the new haircut and the glasses-free eyes (since Lasik surgery last year), Moylan isn't often recognized when he goes out in Atlanta. And when he and Coupel go to Melbourne for three months during the off-season, nobody outside the relatively small baseball community will recognize him.

But that's fine with Moylan. He plans to spend as much time as possible with his daughters, who live there with their mother (he has weekly web cam dates with them during the season). He'll also catch up with friends, go to barbecues, and tweak his diet to include more amber ale.

"It's going to be tough not to put on 40 pounds, but I'll have to do it," Moylan said, "because it's my job. I'm just looking forward to going back there. Australia is very relaxed and chilled out, unlike here, where everyone is moving so fast. Being there helps me chill out, too."

And, naturally, it presents the perfect opportunity to restock with an all-important case of Vegemite for next season.

CAST AWAY

After A Sensational Start To His Career, Jordan Schafer Waits Impatiently, Hoping He Can Recapture The Magic

BY ANDY JOHNSTON

If Jordan Schafer could turn back time, he would return to a rainy night in April.

The Braves had just knocked off the Washington Nationals, 6-5, thanks in part to Schafer, who scored the winning run after reaching on his second hit of the game. He was jubilant, celebrating after he slid across home plate to end the Braves' rain-delayed home opener at 1:25 a.m.

It was just the latest in a string of great moments for Schafer, who won the starting centerfielder's job in spring training by hitting .324 and hit a home run in his first big league at-bat April 5 against the defending World Series champion Philadelphia Phillies. He had five hits in his first four games (including his second home run in only his 11th at-bat).

He was just 22 years old, and his rookie year was off to a tremendous start. More than 20 family members and friends attended the season-opener in Philadelphia, and he said he had to stifle a smile as he rounded the bases after hitting his first home run. It appeared Schafer's suspension-plagued 2008 was way back in the rearview mirror.

Something went wrong on that night of April 10, though.

At first, Schafer didn't think much about the pain in his left wrist. He felt a pop when he swung at the first pitch of his 10th-inning at-bat, but then he singled on another pitch. He felt more discomfort on that swing and he thought something didn't feel right as he moved around the bases and scored the winning run.

Caught up in the celebration, he kept his mouth shut, a move he now second-guesses.

"I wish I had said something that night. I just didn't want to say anything. I didn't want to tell them I was hurting," said Schafer, only the fifth player in franchise history to hit a home run in his first at-bat. "You work for something your entire life, and when you get to the top, you're hurt four games into your major league career. You do anything to play. You do what you have to do to play."

Schafer, the first Brave to make his big league debut on Opening Day since 1981 (leftfielder Rufino Linares), said he reported the pain to the Braves the next day, but thought he could play through it. He blocked it out, and at first, the strategy worked.

Schafer hit a home run on Opening Night, but quickly tailed off, at least in part due to a hand injury that required surgery that will keep him in a cast until December.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

HOLIDAY SP

WHO WANTS A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE ANYWAY?

We don't know any Braves fans that want either a partridge or a pear tree for Christmas - let alone the two of them together. But we do know plenty of Braves fans that would love to have FREE Braves autographs and a discount on Braves merchandise.

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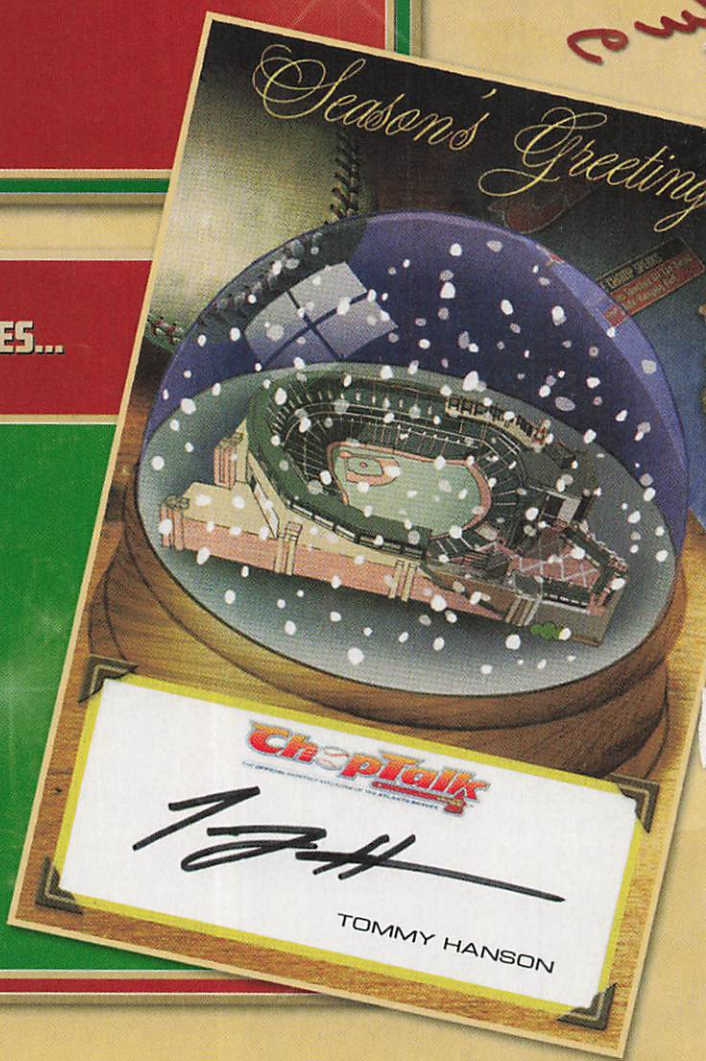
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-  CURRENT BRAVES
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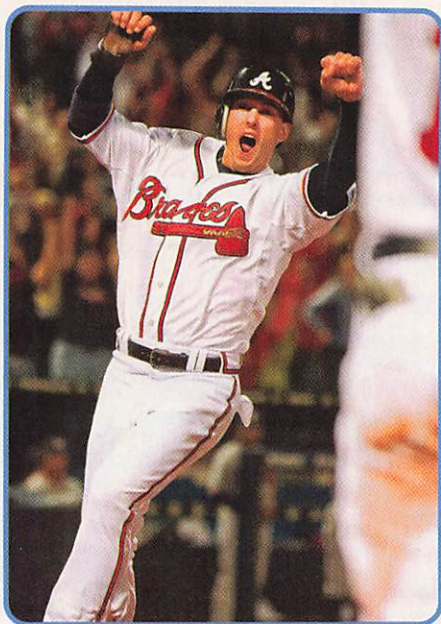
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ATLANTA BRAVES

The night after the injury, he had three more hits, even though his wrist hurt so much he could barely follow through on his swing. He thought it was just a nagging injury and that it would heal, so he kept playing and pushing and performing well enough to make the Braves and their fans believe their centerfielder of the future was in Atlanta to stay.

"He expressed to me that it hurt him," said Dave Schafer, Jordan's father. "He said, 'Dad, I've lived my whole life with this dream. If I have to play with one arm, I'm going to play.'"

Frank Wren said he was aware of the injury, but the consensus was that Schafer could play through it.

"We just thought it was 'one of those things,'" Wren said.

Soon, the hits stopped coming - and the strikeouts began to pile up. Schafer finished April with a .273 average and a .415 on-base percentage. In May, he hit .158, and his OBP plummeted to .313. He struck out 63 times in 167 at-bats.

On June 2, Schafer was demoted to Triple-A Gwinnett.

Schafer doesn't know whether or not he caused more damage to his wrist by continuing to play with the injury. He saw action in only nine games for Gwinnett before doctors placed a cast on his hand and wrist for a month. On Aug. 31, hand specialist Dr. Gary Lourie removed a bone spur and sta-

Schafer is jubilant after scoring the winning run in the Braves' home opener April 10, but he also sustained an injury that night that haunted him the rest of the season.

bilized two bones on the carpometacarpal (CMC) joint in Schafer's left hand.

The Braves' third-round pick in the 2005 draft remained in an immobilizing cast that extended from his fingertips to past his elbow for six weeks after the surgery.

"I can't do anything," Schafer said in late September. "It's a little tough tying my shoes. I can't cook. It's terrible. I do most everything left-handed. My right hand is not useful."

Schafer tried to stay busy the final month of the season by hunting for a permanent Atlanta home. He was planning to move from his Midtown condo to a home in suburban Cumming.

He also kept reassuring himself that he handled the injury correctly, and he was looking forward to having the huge cast replaced by a smaller one that would allow him to extend his elbow (the casts were changed in early October). He said that would permit him to work out, run, and start rehab.

"There's always that fear that you don't know what's going to happen. That's frustrating," Schafer said. "I try not to second-guess things. What if I had surgery earlier in the year? At the same time, I wouldn't have been able to play anymore this year.

It's a catch-22. It's done with now. I'm confident, and with my therapist here to get me through this, I'll come back. I'm young enough and should recover quickly. Whatever they tell me to do, I'm going to do. It'll take care of itself."

If everything goes well with rehab, Schafer hopes to begin swinging a bat in late November or early December and begin preparing for spring training.

"At the end of every year, Jordan always takes six weeks off before he starts training for the next year," Dave Schafer said. "By the end of that time every year, he gets hungry. He gets ready to start training. This has been really tough on him. He hasn't been to the park. He's not around his teammates. He's antsy to get going. He can't wait to get started. He said he's going to work harder than before. He can't wait to get going."

Schafer's frustration comes through at times. So many bad things - from his wrist injury to the strikeouts to the demotion to the surgery - have happened since April. He sometimes can't keep his frustration to himself.

"I feel like it's been a wasted year," he said.

To make matters even worse, one day after Schafer was sent to Gwinnett, the Braves acquired centerfielder Nate McLouth from the Pittsburgh Pirates.



ATLANTA BRAVES

Schafer hit a home run in his first big league at-bat and two in his first 11 at-bats.



McLouth is under contract through at least 2011, raising questions about Schafer's future with the club. Schafer said earlier this year he wouldn't mind moving to a corner outfield position, if it would help the team.

"Like I told Jordan after the McLouth deal, we value him and we like him," Wren said. "We look forward to him contributing in the big leagues and we'll have a place for him. He's a talented young player. We're not going to prejudge his condition. We'll make a determination when the time's right. We love the speed he provides. We love the defense he provides. We look forward to him doing that for us."

The 6-1, 200-pound Schafer also knows he'll have to quiet his critics, who quickly began to question his ability as his average dropped and his strikeouts began to pile up. Some folks think the Braves rushed Schafer, who turned 23 in September, to the majors, especially since he missed 50 games in 2008 while serving a suspension for testing positive for a banned substance.

Schafer also has to come back from a serious injury and surgery for the first time. Will the injury affect his swing? Will it affect his confidence? Will he be ready to demonstrate the natural talent that earned him recognition as one of the Braves' top prospects in 2008?

"It's been a hard time for him," Dave Schafer said. "He's never had a major injury in his life, nothing more than a tweaked hamstring or something like that. Even as a little boy. He's not comfortable with [not being able to play]. But I was at the surgery, and I talked to Dr. Lourie, and he said there is a 95 percent chance there will be no lingering injury from this. I firmly believe Jordan will come back healthy and be more ready than ever."

Schafer has been trying to make the best of his situation. He sometimes finds it hard to believe the differences between the highs of his spring training success and his opening night homer to the lows of his injury and being sent to Gwinnett in June, and then having surgery in August.

"You know, things happen. You don't have to like that they happen, but they happen," Schafer said. "I was a totally different player after the injury. It's hard enough to be a rookie in the major leagues, and it's even tougher to compete when you're injured."

"Could I have done things differently? Yes, but that's behind me now. I'm 100 percent confident that I'll be 100 percent fine. I'll be ready for next year."

PUJOLS UNLIKELY TO TIP HIS HAND TO CARDS NOW

ALBERT PUJOLS IS IN NO RUSH to sign a contract extension with the Cardinals. In fact, a source with knowledge of his thinking said the chances of a deal happening this off-season are "slim and none." Pujols is under team control through 2011, and he will want to assess the Cardinals' future before making any long-term decisions. Leftfielder and Division Series Game 2 goat **Matt Holliday**, former Braves utilityman **Mark DeRosa** and yes, manager **Tony La Russa**, are all unsigned beyond this season.

Signing righthander **Josh Johnson** long-term is the Marlins' No. 1 priority this off-season. Johnson is only 25, but he is just two years away from free agency. He would not settle for a deal less than the four-year, \$38-million contract that the Royals awarded **Zack Greinke** at the same service level last off-season. If no agreement is reached, Johnson would be unlikely to sign long-term next off-season, when he would be only one year away from free agency. At that point, the Marlins might be forced to trade him.

Off-season priority No. 1 for the Cubs is trading outfielder **Milton Bradley**. Club officials were confident that they would not need to assume the majority of the \$21 million remaining on Bradley's contract to move him. Their intent was to negotiate a salary exchange involving another underachieving player with an inflated deal.

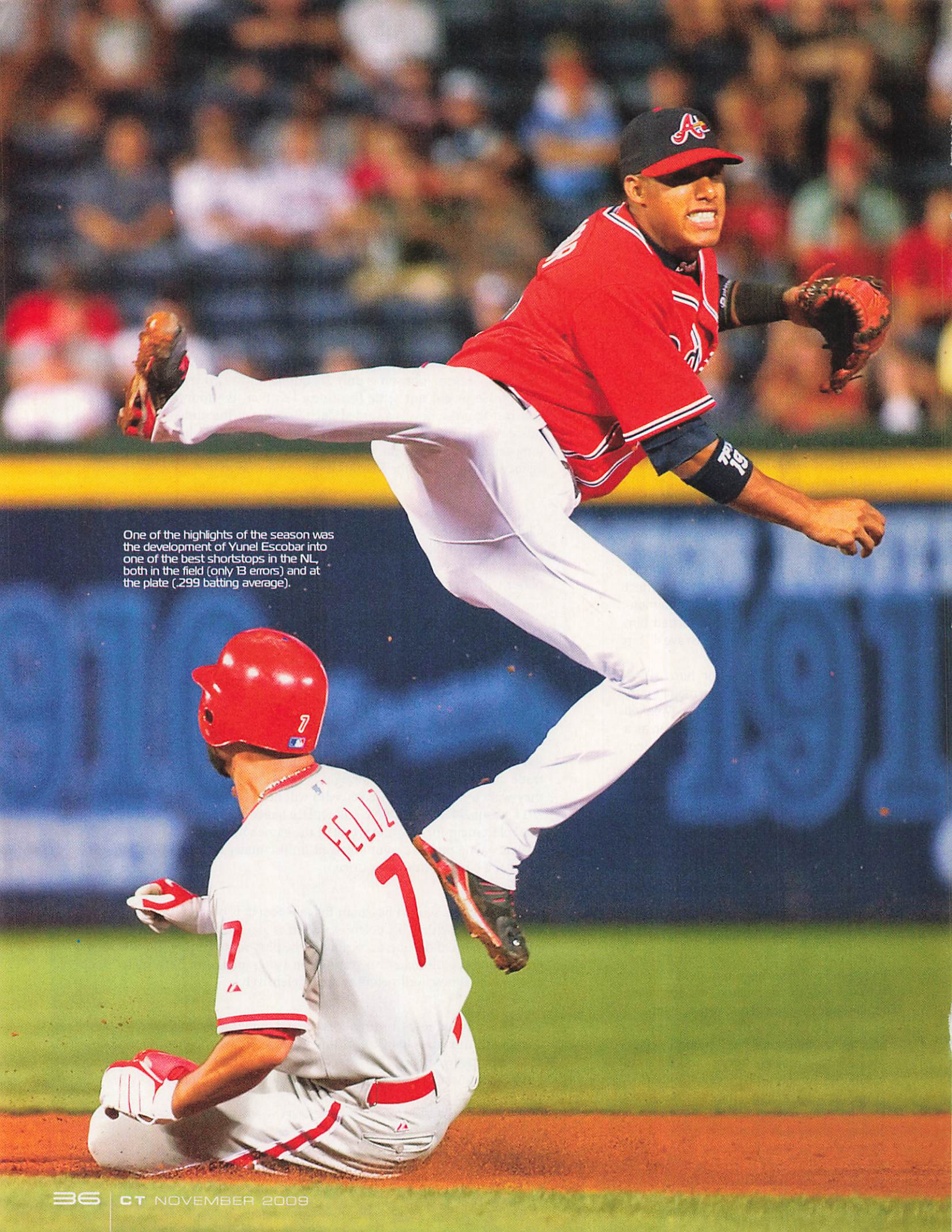
The Red Sox's **Jacoby Ellsbury** frequently is compared to **Johnny Damon**, but a better comparison might be **Kenny Lofton**. Ellsbury is just 26, and in time he might hit for even more power than Lofton did. His batting line this season — .301 batting average, .355 on-base percentage, .415 slugging percentage — is close to Lofton's career line of .299-.372-.423.

With **Rafael Soriano** and **Mike Gonzalez** free agents, the Braves are among the teams that need to patch their late-inning relief. The glut of closers on the trade and free-agent markets might compel the White Sox to act quickly if they wish to move Bobby Jenks, who will not be a free agent until after the 2011 season. **Matt Thornton** could replace Jenks, but then the Sox would have no replacement for Thornton, one of the game's most-dominant left-handed relievers. One possible solution: Wait until January to sign a remaining free agent at a bargain-basement price.

While Orioles second baseman **Brian Roberts** is perhaps the game's leading doubles machine, his defensive falloff is alarming. This is Roberts' third straight season of decline, according to the plus-minus ratings on **Bill James Online** and the ultimate zone ratings on **Fangraphs.com**. Both metrics suggest that he is now well-below average defensively.

And finally, a quote from Yankees general manager **Brian Cashman** on the changes in manager **Joe Girardi** this season: "He has opened himself up to make sure people realize that he is one of the best people you can know. He's given everyone a chance to see not just his intellect, but his heart."

— KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



One of the highlights of the season was the development of Yunel Escobar into one of the best shortstops in the NL, both in the field (only 13 errors) and at the plate (.299 batting average).



SEASON IN REVIEW

LATE-SEASON PLAYOFF PUSH LEADS TO BIGGEST ONE-SEASON IMPROVEMENT SINCE 1991

BY GARY CARUSO

IN MANY WAYS, it was a landmark season for the Braves. Even though they extended their new "streak" to four years without post-season play, they not only made a run at the playoffs into the last week of the schedule, but also improved by 14 games (86-76) over last year's record (72-90).

That's no small accomplishment, because it's the biggest one-season improvement the Braves have made since they went "Worst to First" in 1991.

Along the way, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz became ex-Braves, and Bobby Cox announced that 2010 will be his last season as manager. That alone is a lot to digest in one year. But there was much more.

Tommy Hanson made his highly anticipated debut, and he was lights out! His 2.89 ERA was the lowest for a Braves rookie (at least 20 starts) since 1943 (Nate Andrews 2.58).

Ditto for the starting rotation in general, including second-year righthander Jair Jurrjens and newcomer Javier Vazquez, who were among the league's ERA leaders, Derek Lowe, who in spite of having a sub-par season still tied for the team lead with 15 wins, and Kenshin Kawakami, who produced some of the best clutch pitching on the staff.

Jeff Francoeur, the one-time hometown hero, was traded to the Mets, and Adam LaRoche made a very successful return to Atlanta. Brian McCann made the NL All-Star team for the fourth consecutive year, and Martin Prado and Matt Diaz made strong cases that they deserve regular jobs in the starting lineup next season.

It was a season that didn't end the way everyone associated with the team hoped it would, yet it was more successful and compelling than any other season since the Braves won the last of their record 14 straight division titles in 2005.

The season began with great promise

TEAM LEADERS

HITTERS

Average	.313	Matt Diaz
Home Runs	24	Adam LaRoche
RBI's	94	Brian McCann
Hits	158	Yunel Escobar
Runs	89	Yunel Escobar
Doubles	38	Martin Prado
Triples	4	Matt Diaz
Walks	101	Chipper Jones
Steals	19	Nate McLouth
On-Base Pct.	.390	Matt Diaz
Slug. Pct.	.488	Matt Diaz

PITCHERS

Wins	15	Derek Lowe,
		Javier Vazquez
ERA	2.60	Jair Jurrjens
		(starter)
	2.42	Mike Gonzalez
		(reliever)
Games	87	Peter Moylan
Saves	27	Rafael Soriano
Innings	219.1	Javier Vazquez
Strikeouts	238	Javier Vazquez
Opponents' Batting Avg.	.194	Rafael Soriano
		(reliever)
	.223	Javier Vazquez
		(starter)

when the Braves ventured into hostile territory to open the season in Philadelphia on a Sunday night before an ESPN audience. Home runs by McCann, Francoeur and rookie Jordan Schafer - in his first big league at-bat - produced a 4-1 victory over the World Champion Phillies behind the pitching of Lowe.

The Braves took two of three and nearly swept the series in Philly, then opened at Turner Field by winning three straight from

Washington. The excitement of a 5-1 start was short-lived, as the hitting inconsistencies of the lineup began to take its toll, ruining the efforts of starting pitcher after starting pitcher that departed with no decision or even a loss, due primarily to the lack of support.

Yet as late as July 3, only two games shy of the midway point, the Braves were only two games out of first place - in spite of a 39-40 record. It seemed as if no other team wanted to win the division either.

Slowly but surely, though it was hard to tell at the time, mid-season changes made by Frank Wren began to have an impact in shaping the club for its late-season run.

First, Wren acquired multi-talented centerfielder Nate McLouth from Pittsburgh on June 3 in exchange for three prospects. This immediately made a drastic improvement because he replaced Schafer, who had become painfully unproductive - most likely due to pain in his wrist that eventually required hand surgery.

Trading Francoeur to the Mets for Church a month later (July 10) was beneficial for two reasons. It got Francoeur, who in spite of a strong April, was unable to shake the doldrums at the plate that had been a drag to the team's production for a season and a half, out of the lineup. Secondly, it opened a spot in the outfield that Diaz eventually was able to claim, and in doing so, injected much needed hitting that greatly aided the Braves' late rally.

The third major move that gave the lineup some pop was Wren reacquiring LaRoche from Boston at the July 31 trading deadline in exchange for fellow first baseman Casey Kotchman, who never made an error in two half-seasons with Atlanta, but also never lived up to his offensive billing, particularly in the power department. He

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

hit but eight home runs in 450 at-bats. LaRoche hit eight home runs in his first 23 games with Atlanta and 12 overall in 212 at-bats, knocking in 40 runs and hitting .325.

On June 27, the Braves were 34-40, a season-worst six games under .500. But from June 28-Sept. 28, they were 52-29 (.642), the best record in baseball over that three-month stretch. They capped it by winning 15 of 17 from Sept. 10-28 to pull within two games of the Rockies in the wild card chase with six games to play - all at Turner Field.

That the Braves lost all of those final six games, their longest losing streak of the year, was a supreme disappointment and caused them to finish in third place, a game behind second-place Florida and seven back of the Phillies. However, the fact is that Colorado didn't fold and finished with 92 wins. The Braves would have had to run the table in the final week just to manage a regular-season tie and forge a one-game playoff.

RECORD: 86-76 (.531), 3rd Place, -7

COMPARISON: The Braves' 86 victories were only two fewer than they had in 2001 (88) when they won the NL East by a two-game margin.

THE LONG BALL: The Braves ranked 10th in the NL with 149 home runs. However, they also ranked first in the NL in fewest home runs allowed - 119.



The acquisition of Adam LaRoche (R) at the trading deadline injected some much-needed power into the Atlanta lineup.

FAB FOUR: Between them, Peter Moylan (87), Mike Gonzalez (80), Eric O'Flaherty (78) and Rafael Soriano (77) made 322 appearances, making them four of the nine busiest pitchers in the NL. Moylan and Gonzalez ranked second and third in

appearances, and O'Flaherty and Soriano tied for seventh and ninth. They combined for a 2.80 ERA and 37 saves.



Though Rafael Soriano had a tendency to give up some big home runs, he had 27 saves in 31 opportunities and limited foes to a .194 batting average.

SPARK PLUG: From June 2 to the end of the season, Martin Prado hit safely in 71 of 97 games, going 120-for-377 (.318) with 29 doubles, nine home runs and 42 RBIs. He had 32 multi-hit games in that period, including three 4-hit games and a 10-game hitting streak. His 11 doubles in September tied for second in the majors.

MAKING CONTACT: Atlanta's hitters were fourth in the NL in fewest strikeouts (1,064).

LEATHER: In fielding stats, the Braves were tied for seventh in errors (96), tied for sixth in fielding percentage (.985), and fifth in turning doubleplays (159).

LEFTY KILLER: Matt Diaz batted .412 against left-handed pitching, second in the majors.

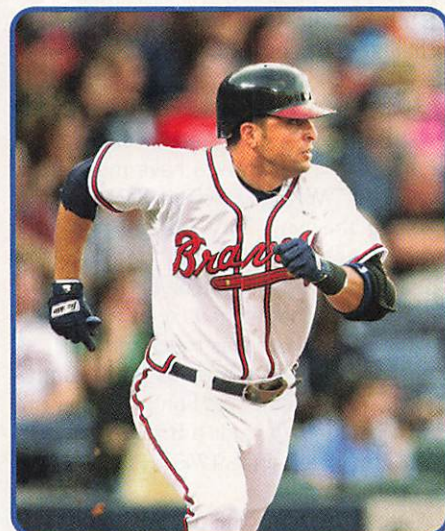
MR. CLUTCH: Yunel Escobar led the majors by hitting .373 (50-for-134) with runners in scoring position.

4-YEAR BLITZ: Since the start of the 2006 season, his first full year in the majors, Brian McCann leads all major league catchers in home runs (86), extra-base hits (237), doubles (149), RBIs (366) and game-winning RBIs (52).

NERVES OF STEEL: The Yankees were the best team of record in the majors in 2009 and have a legendary franchise history that's second to none. But that didn't faze rookie Tommy Hanson, who made his

fourth career start against the Bronx Bombers June 23 at Turner Field. He worked five and one-third shutout innings and was credited with the 4-0 victory, thanks to three and two-thirds innings of scoreless relief by Peter Moylan, Mike Gonzalez and Rafael Soriano.

STAYING POWER: Bobby Cox was credited with his 2,000th win as Braves manager June 8 when Atlanta beat Pittsburgh, 7-6, in 15 innings. He became just the fourth manager in history to win 2,000 games with the same team. Though he won't catch the first two (Connie Mack, Athletics 3,582, and John McGraw, Giants, 2,583), due to his decision to retire after 2010, he passed Walter Alston (Dodgers, 2,040) for third place on Aug. 31 with a 5-2 win at Florida.



Martin Prado took over the starting job at second base, also filled in occasionally at third and first, and was one of the team's most-productive hitters.

NOT SO SWEET: Home was sour rather than sweet for the 2009 Braves. Thanks to losing the last six games of the season at home (their longest season-ending losing streak since 1978), they finished 40-41 at Turner Field. It was just the third time since 1991 (2001 and 2006) that they lost more games than they won at home. They were 46-35 (.568) on the road, second-best in the NL.

STOPPED: Chipper Jones hit 18 home runs, the first season in his career he hit less than 20. That left him in a tie with Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews, also a Braves third baseman (1952-66), for the major league record of 14 seasons with 20 or more homers to start a career.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

ROTATION'S ERA RANKS BEST IN NL



Jair Jurrjens (R) and Tommy Hanson, both only 23 years old, give the Braves an impressive duo to build the starting rotation around for years to come.

BY STEVE FALL

MUCH ABOUT THE BRAVES' 2009 season made little sense. They played great on the road, but struggled at home. They had a lineup loaded with left-handed hitters, but hit lefty pitchers better than righthanders. They posted a better run-differential than two playoff teams, yet missed the post-season.

Despite the team's unusual statistics in some areas, one group delivered outstanding performance. The starting rotation topped the National League with a 3.52 earned run average, evoking memories of the great rotations that helped the team win 14 straight division titles. But did the 2009 rotation led by Javier Vazquez, Jair Jurrjens and Tommy Hanson compare to the great staffs with Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz?

Since the level of scoring changes, comparing ERA to the league average provides a good way to compare staffs from different seasons. The 2009 starters had an ERA 0.68 below the overall NL ERA (4.20). Most Braves staffs during the division titles streak surpassed that figure, but not all of them. The 1998 (-1.18 below the league) and 1997 rotations (-1.16) produced incredible numbers. But the 1996 (-0.77) and 1992 staffs (-0.56), for example, had similar numbers to the 2009 group. Overall, they ranked 10th compared to the 15 starting rotations from 1991 through 2005.

This year's starters did excel at striking out batters. Their 7.2 strikeouts per nine innings placed fifth among the aforementioned staffs. That also marked the most by any Braves rotation since 1998 (7.4).

One thing is certain: The 2009 rotation produced a huge upgrade over 2008. The starters' ERA dropped 1.08 runs from last season's 4.60 figure. That group ranked just 11th in the NL.

The bullpen also performed well, especially when it came to keeping the ball in the park. The relievers surrendered just 33 home runs, fewest in the NL.

Peter Moylan set a major league record by making 87 appearances this season without giving up a home run. By working 73 innings, Moylan also became the first pitcher to throw at least 70 innings in one season without a home run since Heathcliff Slocumb in 1994.

The Braves had two pitchers allow two or fewer homers in at least 70 appearances, with Eric O'Flaherty (78) joining Moylan. In franchise history, only one other pitcher accomplished this in any previous season. In 2006, Macay McBride gave up two homers in 71 games.

Teams usually try to have left/right balance in both their lineup and rotation. The Braves had neither. Left-handed pitchers

made just five starts for the club this season, all by Jo-Jo Reyes. That total tied for the lowest figure in Atlanta Braves history – matched in both 1973 and 1981. As with this year, one pitcher made all five starts – Jimmy Freeman in 1973 and Larry McWilliams in 1981. To show how unusual this is, the Braves have averaged 45 starts per year by southpaws since coming to Atlanta.

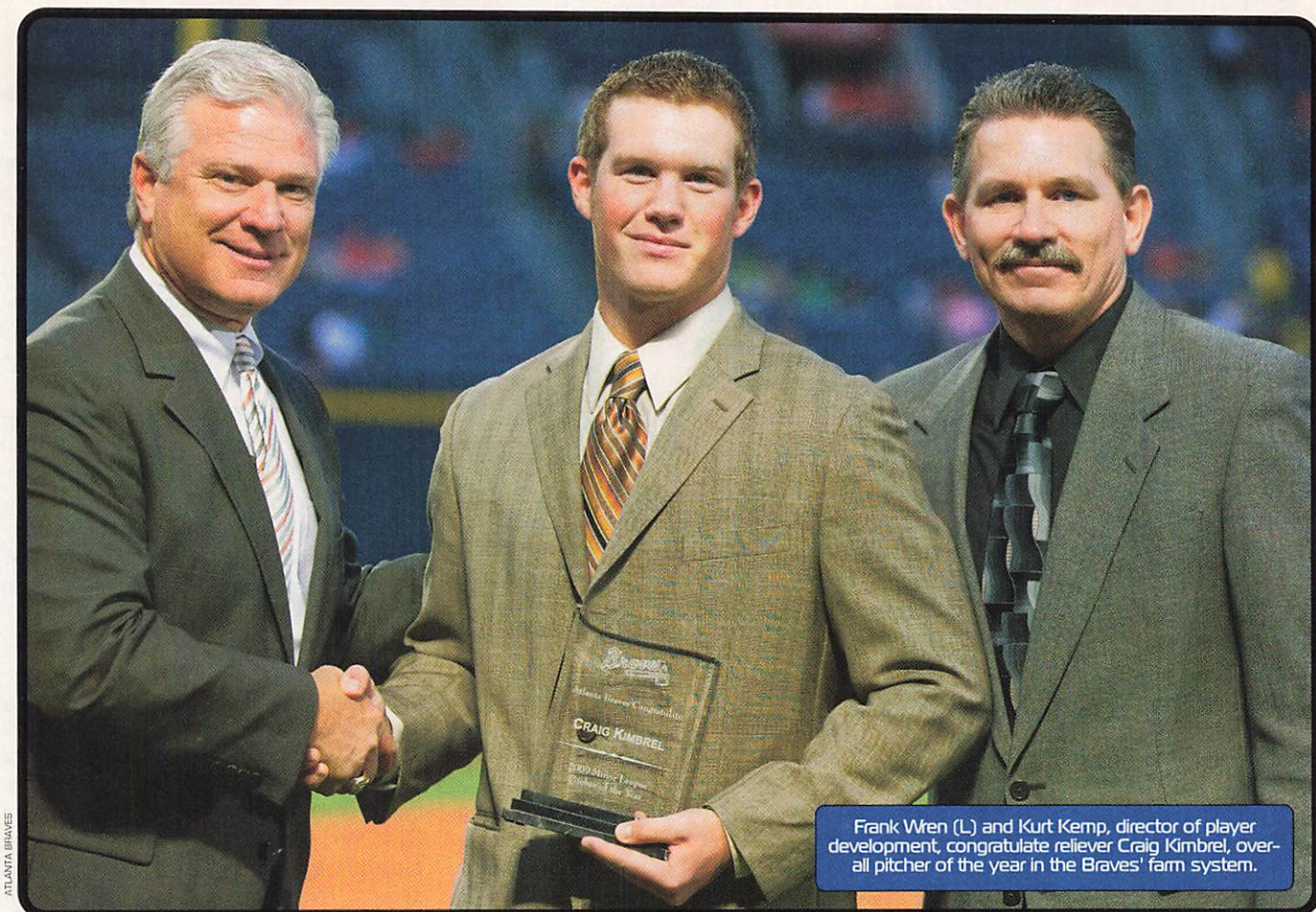
The Braves had over 400 more plate appearances by left-handed batters than righties in 2009. Despite this imbalance, they showed no vulnerability to lefties. They actually hit slightly better against left-handed pitchers (.268 batting average, .339 on-base percentage, .411 slugging) than righthanders (.261/.339/.403).

Although they ended the year on a six-game skip, the 86-76 Braves still improved by 14 games over last season. That tied the 2002 club for the third-best turnaround in Atlanta history. They trailed only the 29-game improvement during the famed "Worst to First" 1991 season and the 1980 Braves, who played 14 1/2 games better than the previous season. This year's club tied for the franchise's ninth-best turnaround. The 1936 Boston Braves led the way with a phenomenal 32 1/2-game improvement.

The Braves outscored their opponents by 94 runs this season. That trailed just two NL clubs – the Dodgers (+169) and Phillies (+111). Atlanta topped two of the league's four playoff teams – the Cardinals (+90) and Rockies (+89) – but couldn't reach the post-season.

The Braves posted the second-best road record in the NL (46-35). Only the Phils owned a better mark (48-33). However, the team had a disappointing 40-41 home record. That led just two NL teams – Arizona (36-45) and Washington (33-48).

Brian McCann became just the second catcher ever to hit 20 homers and 35 doubles in consecutive seasons. He matched Johnny Bench, who reached those levels in 1974-75. McCann's .498 career slugging percentage ranks third among all catchers in major league history with at least 2,000 plate appearances. That puts him behind only Mike Piazza (.545) and Hall of Famer Roy Campanella (.500). Long-time Brave Javy Lopez (.491) ranks fourth.



Frank Wren (L) and Kurt Kemp, director of player development, congratulate reliever Craig Kimbrel, overall pitcher of the year in the Braves' farm system.

FUTURE STARS

Strikeout Sensation **Craig Kimbrel** Could Bring His Heat To Atlanta As Early As Next Season

BY BILL BALLEW

CRAIG KIMBREL hasn't remained in one place for long during his first two seasons in the Braves' organization.

In 2008, shortly after signing with Atlanta as a third-round draft pick out of Wallace State (Ala.) Community College, the right-handed reliever climbed from Danville (advanced rookie) to Rome (Class A) to Myrtle Beach (Advanced A) in less than three months. This past year, he revisited Rome and Myrtle Beach before working his way to Mississippi (Double A) and Gwinnett (Triple A) during the final month of the season.

By the end of 2009, Kimbrel had overcome an early bump in the road at Myrtle Beach to become one of the few players ever to play at all four full-season levels of the Atlanta farm system in the same season. He also saved 18 games, posted a 2.85 ERA, and limited opposing hitters to a .150 batting average to earn the Braves' Minor League Pitcher of the Year award.

Kimbrel and the rest of the Braves' minor league award winners were honored at Turner Field Sept. 18 during Future Stars Night. They also signed autographs and interacted with fans in the plaza prior to the game.

"When you have the kind of arm that he has, that fastball will take you up a few levels faster than most other guys," said Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development. "Then you add the evolvment of his breaking ball, and you have a pretty nasty combination of pitches. When he locates his pitches in the strike zone, he can get hitters out at any level."

Armed with a fastball that has been clocked as high as 98 mph and consistently reaches the 93-95 mph range, Kimbrel has been nothing short of overpowering since signing. He struck out 56 batters in 35 innings in 2008 before striking out 103 hitters in 60 innings this past season. His average of 15.45 strikeouts per

nine innings ranked second in all the minors.

Despite his dominating repertoire, Kimbrel struggled with his command throughout April. He returned to Myrtle Beach to start the season but moved down to Rome after allowing 10 hits, 18 walks and 13 earned runs in 10 2/3 innings. The righthander wound up spending May and the first three weeks of June with the R-Braves and saved 10 games in as many opportunities while giving up only nine hits, two runs and six walks in 20 innings.

"I was focused in spring training and the start of the season, but I wasn't to the point where I should have been," Kimbrel said. "My arm angle had dropped a little bit, and I figured that out right before I left Myrtle Beach the first time. When I started getting back on top of the ball, I reduced my walks, and my control as well as the quality of all my pitches got better."

Kimbrel limited Carolina League hitters to a .157 average and struck out 30 batters in 15 2/3 innings during his six-week encore with the Pelicans. Promoted to Mississippi in August, he continued his dominance against more experienced hitters, who batted just .083 while Kimbrel went 6-for-6 in save opportunities. He then concluded the season with two scoreless one-inning outings for Gwinnett in early September.

"I love the way he takes the mound with the game on the line," said Rome manager Randy Ingle. "He knows he can be overpowering, and he's willing to prove he's better

BRAVES MINOR LEAGUE PITCHERS & PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

TEAM	PLAYER	PITCHER
ORGANIZATION	JASON HEYWARD	CRAIG KIMBREL
GWINNETT	BARBARO CANIZARES	MARIANO GOMEZ
MISSISSIPPI	MATT YOUNG	KYLE COFIELD
MYRTLE BEACH	DONELL LINARES	CORY GEARRIN
ROME	YOEL CAMPUSANO	J.J. HOOVER
DANVILLE	RIAAN SPANJER-FURSTENBURG	MATT CRIM
GULF COAST	CHRISTIAN BETHANCOURT	ROBINSON LOPEZ
DOMINICAN	EDISON SANCHEZ	ANDY OTERO

than the batter. He has a heavy, sinking fastball and a great breaking ball to go with that closer's mentality. I think he has a chance to get to Atlanta in a hurry."

According to Kimbrel, the keys to his continued success center on improving his changeup and doing a better job of locating his fastball and curveball. While he estimates that he threw no more than 20 changeups over the course of the season, upgrading the off-speed pitch is his primary objective in the Arizona Fall League.

"The changeup is better than it was last year," Kimbrel said. "I'm really working on it this off-season, trying to get it to the point where I can mix it in there any time I want. I learned a lot about myself as a pitcher over the course of the season, and if I can give the hitters another pitch to think about, it should help me be successful in the big

leagues, which is where I want to be."

Kimbrel may make his major league debut in 2010 and could be joined by Jason Heyward, the Braves' Minor League Player of the Year. Considered the top prospect in the minors by many scouts, the rightfielder made a rapid ascent of his own by spending the first two months of the season at Myrtle Beach prior to a promotion to Mississippi on July 3. He, too, joined Gwinnett for the final week of the season and responded with four hits and two RBIs in 11 at-bats against International League pitchers.

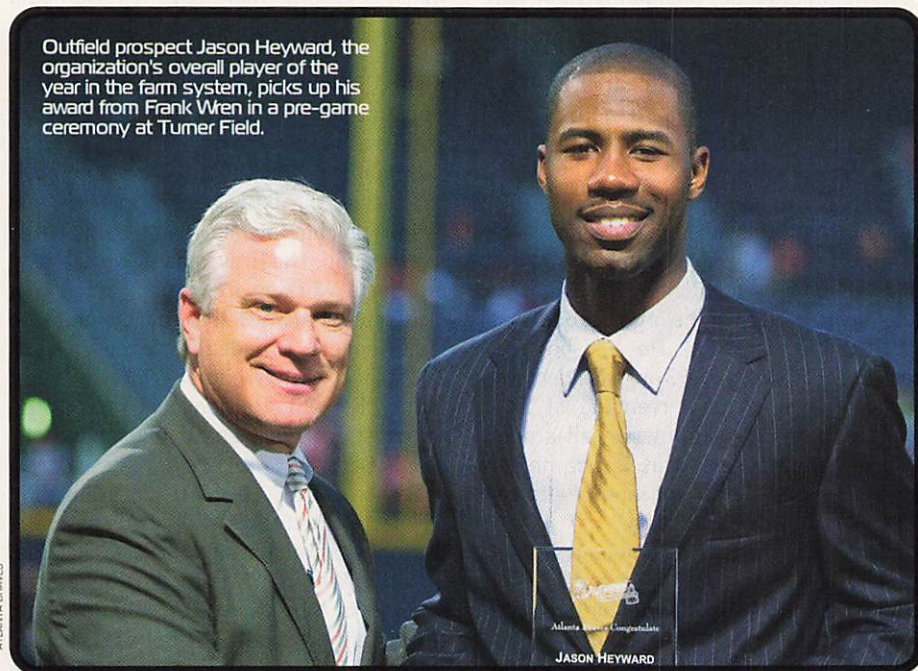
"The thing that impressed me most about Jason this year was his continued development in the areas of his game that don't necessarily show up in the boxscore," Kemp said. "His defensive play in the outfield and his overall baserunning were two areas I thought he showed tremendous growth. I think that just lends itself to our continued belief that he is going to be a very complete baseball player at the major league level."

The 14th overall pick in the 2007 draft out of Henry County (Ga.) High School, Heyward nearly doubled his home run output from 2008 by hitting 17 homers in 99 games. Despite displaying more power, he continued to maintain his batting average, finishing with a combined .323.

Managers in both the Carolina League and the Southern League rated him the top prospect in a poll conducted by Baseball America, and the trade publication, as well as USA Today Baseball Weekly, selected Heyward the top prospect in the minors.

"When you combine the physical talent and the mental makeup he has with the drive to be successful and to be a good player, good things are going to happen in this game," Kemp said. "Jason has that complete package, and it's going to be fun watching him play at higher levels."

Outfield prospect Jason Heyward, the organization's overall player of the year in the farm system, picks up his award from Frank Wren in a pre-game ceremony at Turner Field.



ATLANTA BRAVES



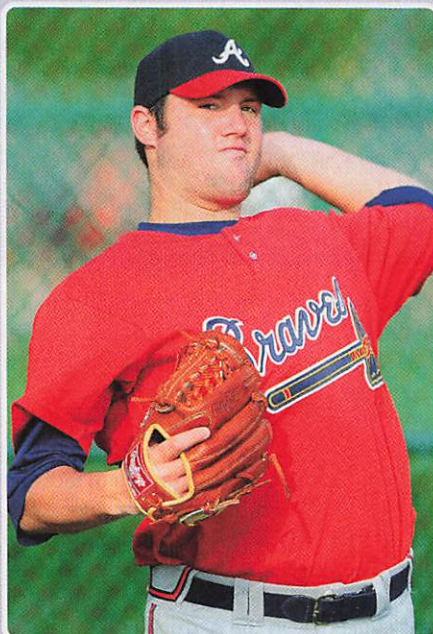
NO. 1 DRAFT PICKS MINOR, DEVALL PROGRESSING IN FALL LEAGUES

The regular season is over, but the activity remained constant at the Braves' Florida training complex at Disney's Wide World of Sports.

Instructional League was the main attraction from Sept. 17-Oct. 17, with approximately 40 of the youngest and most talented Atlanta farmhands participating in anticipation of bigger and better days in the near future.

First-round draft pick Mike Minor pitched in the first half of Instructional League in order to maintain the arm strength he rebuilt during his four late-season outings at Rome. Minor, who did not pitch in a game situation for more than two months after being selected out of Vanderbilt by the Braves in June, threw in Florida through the end of September. He then took off a week before reporting to the Arizona Fall League in early October and is scheduled to work as a starter with the Peoria Saguaros, who began play Oct. 13.

Another first-round draft pick, Brett DeVal, also pitched in Florida after a



Brett DeVal, the Braves' No. 1 draft pick in 2008, pitched in the Instructional League for the first time since June 21 and experienced no arm problems.

recurring forearm problem led to him being shut down by the Braves after June 21 at Rome. The 2008 draftee out of Niceville, Fla., made a handful of starts during Instructional League after throwing bullpen sessions and batting practice early in camp. Rumors were persistent during the latter half of the season that elbow surgery appeared imminent for DeVal, but the Braves were simply trying to err on the side of caution regarding the problem that has plagued him on and off since signing more than a year ago.

"We're just making sure he's healthy, and we've been doing that while helping him build the strength in his arm," said Kurt Kemp, Atlanta's director of player development. "If he's not [healthy], we'll adjust accordingly. But he's thrown the ball in Instructional League as well as I have seen him throw it, with the ball coming out of his hand with a lot of ease and velocity. He said he's felt as good as he has all year, and he's excited about the progress he's making."

OUTFIELDER COLE MILES, who saw some activity at second base this past season with Myrtle Beach, has split his time equally between the two positions during Instructional League. Miles does a good job of covering center field, but the Braves believe he has the hands, quickness and versatility to play the infield, as well. By following in the footsteps of such fellow two-position players as J.C. Holt and Matt Young in the Atlanta organization, Miles can give managers added roster flexibility.

"He's done very well at second base," Kemp said. "We believe for a player who is capable of doing this, it serves him well and it helps his team. We haven't made the decision to have Cole play only here or there. We really want to help him develop and maximize his potential at both positions."

The Braves also like what they are seeing with outfielder Adam Milligan. Signed in 2008 after being drafted in the sixth round out of Walters State (Ala.)

Community College, Milligan did not play in the minor leagues that year due to a knee injury. Kemp and the Braves' brass considered starting the outfielder in Rome this past year, yet opted for a more conservative path, due to his lack of professional experience.

Despite not playing his first game in 2009 until the third week of June, Milligan wound up playing at Danville, Rome and Myrtle Beach, where he combined to hit 13 home runs (good for fifth in the organization) with 49 RBIs (tied for 10th). He also batted a combined .344 with a .393 on-base percentage and a slugging percentage of .592. Milligan possesses impressive all-around strength and has shown in Florida he has the makings of becoming one of the top prospects in the organization.

"When you look at his combined season, he had a terrific year," Kemp said. "We thought it would be best to get him extra at-bats in extended (spring training) and have him get off on the right foot at Danville,

which is exactly what happened. He had a couple of good weeks at Danville and then had the opportunity to go to Rome, and he carried it forward. When you look at the whole body of work, he swung the bat as well as anyone in the organization."

One other aspect that has become obvious during the early part of Instructional League is the catching depth now in the organization. The Braves have five catching prospects working in Florida, a list that includes Christian Bethancourt, along with Matt Kennelly, Braeden Schlehuder, Jesus Sucre and Jace Whitmer. None is older than 21, with Bethancourt being the youngest, having celebrated his 18th birthday on Sept. 2.

Bethancourt lived up to his reputation this year in the Gulf Coast League as one of the top international signings of 2008 out of Panama. Whitmer was a 17th-round draft pick out of Kennesaw State (Ga.) in June, while Kennelly and Schlehuder struggled with the bat this past season. Kennelly,



TODD REDMOND

however, saw action in the first game of the World Cup for Australia and had two hits in three at-bats and scored twice in a 19-6 victory over the Netherlands Antilles.

"If you ask our staff who has made the greatest amount of progress over the past 12 months in our system, most of them will say Jesus Sucre," Kemp said. "He is more comfortable in all phases of the game. He has a plus arm, and he's getting better as a receiver. He hit very well in Rome. But all of our catchers in Instructional League are prospects, and that's pretty rare. We'll see how far they are able to go, but right now we feel very good about the amount of catching depth we have."

NOTES

The Myrtle Beach Pelicans will host the Carolina League-California League All-Star Game at BB&T Coastal Field for the second time in three years. The annual game, which was played at Myrtle Beach in 2008 in front of a capacity crowd of 6,599, is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, at 7:05 p.m. The Pelicans will also host two days of related activities at the ballpark, as well as at featured attractions along the Grand Strand in celebration of the event...

Dinger, the Pelicans' "Home Run Dog," passed away at the age of 11 in September. Dinger was a fixture at BB&T Coastal Field, beginning with the team's inaugural season in 1999. The yellow lab became a trendsetter in the minors by taking baseballs to the home plate umpire on a nightly basis and participating in other events, both on and off the field...

Baseball America released its annual lists of the top 20 prospects in each of the eight full-season and six short-season minor leagues. A Brave topped four of the lists, with outfielder **Jason Heyward** being named the best prospect in both the Carolina and Southern leagues. Pitcher **Julio Teheran** was ranked No. 1 in the Appalachian League, and catcher **Christian Bethancourt** was deemed to have the best major league potential in the Gulf Coast League.

Other Atlanta farmhands listed by the trade publication include first baseman **Freddie Freeman** (No. 4, Carolina; No. 8, Southern), pitcher **Caleb Brewer** (No. 17, Gulf Coast), pitcher **Tyler Stovall** (No. 16, Appalachian), shortstop **Mycal Jones** (No. 17, Appalachian), and pitcher **Brett Oberholtzer** (No. 20, Appalachian).

AROUND MID-SEASON, I TURNED THE CORNER

PLAYING IN THE World Cup is one of the best experiences I've ever had playing baseball. It was the first time I traveled overseas, and to have the opportunity to play in a different country while representing the USA was definitely an honor.

It was a different experience. The fields were really nice, and when I pitched against Germany, there were 10,000 fans at the game. A few of the games were scarcely attended, but it was really busy

in the final against Cuba. But regardless of how many people were there, the crowds were all electric. They're not quiet during the games - they're all loud.

The people were super nice, and they'd do anything they could to help you. The fans cheered for both teams, and they were really into the games. It was a lot different than playing in front of fans over here.

A couple of the bus rides were tough. We had to travel two hours or a little more a couple of times to games, but it was something the players were used to from playing in the minor leagues. Still, it was well worth it, and otherwise everything could not have been any better.

The guys on the team got along great. We had some unbelievable hitters. We lost our first game against Venezuela, but then everybody seemed to step it up. The pitchers threw great, and we didn't lose another game after that initial loss.

I started against Germany in the first round and then Chinese Taipei and Puerto Rico. The competition wasn't a lot different than pitching at Gwinnett in the International League. Puerto Rico had a lot of guys who have played in the big leagues. Chinese Taipei was very scrappy, and Germany had a good team, too, maybe comparable to a Double-A or a Triple-A club.

I felt confident this year at Gwinnett, and that carried over into the World Cup. It was my first time in Triple-A, and I started a little bit slow. I was trying to figure everything out early, and by the middle of the season, everything started to click. I established my pitches and did a better job of keeping them down in the strike zone. That allowed me to win some games, which gave me momentum and helped me feel more comfortable.

In the time I've been with the Braves, I think I've matured as a pitcher, and I'm able to recognize things better. Derek Botelho has been my pitching coach both seasons, at Mississippi and Gwinnett, and he's done a great job of getting me back on track anytime I've struggled.

I was very happy when I heard last winter that he was moving up to Gwinnett, because it's a huge advantage to have a coach who knows everything about you. He really gets you to look at the game from a variety of angles. He's definitely one of the best pitching coaches I've ever had.

After pitching almost 180 innings between Gwinnett and the World Cup, I'm not going to pitch this winter. I'll start throwing and working out again in November and December and hopefully have a chance to show everyone what I can do in spring training.

Right now, I feel like I'm where I need to be in my career, and I definitely feel that my recent experiences will help when it's time for me to be an Atlanta Brave.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Southern League Pitcher of the Year in 2008, Todd Redmond posted another solid season at Triple-A Gwinnett in 2009 by leading the team in wins (9-6), strikeouts (106) and ERA (4.41) in 27 appearances. In September, Redmond also pitched for Team USA in the World Cup and helped the U.S. win the gold medal by going 3-0 with a 1.21 ERA in three starts in Rome, Italy. The 24-year-old righthander was acquired from Pittsburgh in the spring of 2008 in exchange for reliever Tyler Yates.

"AFTER PITCHING ALMOST 180 INNINGS BETWEEN GWINNETT AND THE WORLD CUP, I'M NOT GOING TO PITCH THIS WINTER."

FARM LEADERS

HITTING

BATTING AVERAGE (MIN. 2.7 PA/GAME)

Riann Spanjer-Furstenburg	Danville	.359
Cory Harrilchak	Danville	.324
Jason Heyward	MB/Miss/Gwinnett	.323
Barbaro Canizares	Gwinnett	.294
Jesus Sucre	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.290
Yoel Campusano	Rome	.288
Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	.287
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	.286
Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	.284
Wes Timmons	Gwinnett	.283

HOME RUNS

Cody Johnson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	32
Gerry Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	23
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	17
Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	15
Adam Milligan	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	13
Barbaro Canizares	Gwinnett	12
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	12
Brandon Hicks	Mississippi	10
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	9
Clint Sammons	Gwinnett	9

RBIs

Cody Johnson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	87
Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	87
Gerry Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	83
Barbaro Canizares	Gwinnett	79
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	64
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	63
Freddie Freeman	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	58
Brandon Jones	Gwinnett	57
Willie Cabrera	Mississippi	53
Adam Milligan	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	49

RUNS

Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	87
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	69
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	66
Cole Miles	Myrtle Beach	64
Brandon Hicks	Mississippi	63
Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	63
Gerry Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	63
Wes Timmons	Gwinnett	62
Cody Johnson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	61
Freddie Freeman	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	58

STOLEN BASES

Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	43
Kyle Rose	Gulf Coast/Danville	27
L.V. Ware	Danville/Rome	27
Travis Jones	Mississippi	23
Cory Harrilchak	Danville	19
Mycal Jones	Danville	19

Brian Barton	Gwinnett	17
Brandon Hicks	Mississippi	17
Cole Miles	Myrtle Beach	16

ON BASE PCT. (MIN. 250 PA)

Wes Timmons	Gwinnett	.416
Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	.414
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	.408
Adam Milligan	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	.393
Barbaro Canizares	Gwinnett	.366
Freddie Freeman	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.363
Brandon Jones	Gwinnett	.360
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	.358
Brian Barton	Gwinnett	.354
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	.351
Chris Burke	Gwinnett	.351

DOUBLES

Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	32
Barbaro Canizares	Gwinnett	31
Brandon Jones	Gwinnett	28
Luis Sumoza	Rome/Myrtle Beach	28
Freddie Freeman	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	27
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	27
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	25
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	25
Chris Shehan	Rome/Myrtle Beach	24

TRIPLES

Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	10
Cole Miles	Myrtle Beach	7
Gerry Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	7
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	6
Mycal Jones	Danville	6
Cory Harrilchak	Danville	5
L.V. Ware	Danville	5
Brian Barton	Gwinnett	4
Yoel Campusano	Rome	4
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	4
Brandon Hicks	Mississippi	4
Jon Mark Owings	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	4
Samuel Sime	Rome	4

WALKS

Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	97
Cody Johnson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	67
Wes Timmons	Gwinnett	62
Brooks Conrad	Gwinnett	53
Brandon Hicks	Mississippi	53
Chris Burke	Gwinnett	52
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	51
Gregor Blanco	Gwinnett	50
Brandon Jones	Gwinnett	50
Travis Jones	Mississippi	50

**SLUGGING PCT. (MIN. 235 ABS)**

Adam Milligan	Danville/Rome/Myrtle Beach	.592
Jason Heyward	MBeach/Mississippi/Gwinnett	.555
Cody Johnson	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.500
Gerry Rodriguez	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.487
Reid Gorecki	Gwinnett	.464
Donell Linares	Myrtle Beach	.444
Brandon Jones	Gwinnett	.419
Freddie Freeman	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.408
Jesus Sucre	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.407
Matt Young	Mississippi/Gwinnett	.403

PITCHING**ERA (MIN. 0.8 IP/G)**

Robinson Lopez	Gulf Coast	1.29
Chris Masters	Danville	1.42
Brett Oberholtzer	Danville	2.01
Caleb Brewer	Gulf Coast	2.82
Matthew Crim	Danville	3.18
Jose Ortegano	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	3.22
Zeke Spruill	Rome/Gulf Coast	3.25
J.J. Hoover	Rome	3.47
Scott Diamond	Mississippi	3.50
Ryne Reynoso	Mississippi/Gwinnett	3.71

WINS

Kyle Cofield	Mississippi	10
Matthew Crim	Danville	10
Jose Ortegano	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	9
Todd Redmond	Gwinnett	9
Zeke Spruill	Rome/Gulf Coast	9
Mariano Gomez	Gwinnett	8
Chris Masters	Danville	8
Jonny Venters	Mississippi/Gwinnett	8
Erik Cordier	Myrtle Beach	7
J.J. Hoover	Rome	7
Edgar Osuna	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	7
Ryne Reynoso	Mississippi/Gwinnett	7
Jacob Thompson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	7

STRIKEOUTS

J.J. Hoover	Rome	150
Randall Delgado	Rome	141
Jacob Thompson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	119
Zeke Spruill	Rome/Gulf Coast	118
Richard Sullivan	Rome/Myrtle Beach/Miss.	115
Scott Diamond	Mississippi	111
Todd Redmond	Gwinnett	106
Edgar Osuna	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	105
Dimaster Delgado	Rome	104
Craig Kimbrel	MBeach/Rome/Miss/Gwinnett	103

INNINGS

Jonny Venters	Mississippi/Gwinnett	156.2
Richard Sullivan	Rome/MBeach/Mississippi	154.2
Jacob Thompson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	154.2
Ryne Reynoso	Mississippi/Gwinnett	153
Edgar Osuna	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	150
Todd Redmond	Gwinnett	145
Kyle Cofield	Mississippi	140.2
Zeke Spruill	Rome/Gulf Coast	135.2
J.J. Hoover	Rome	134.1

WHIP (WALKS + HITS PER IP) (MIN. 25 IP)

Brett Oberholtzer	Danville	0.78
Kris Medlen	Gwinnett	0.80
Tommy Hanson	Gwinnett	0.86
Chris Masters	Danville	0.89
Cory Gearrin	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	0.95
Lee Hyde	GCL/Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	1.04
Charlie Morton	Gwinnett	1.05
Matthew Small	Rome	1.11

OPPONENTS BATTING AVG. (MIN. 25 IP)

Caleb Brewer	Gulf Coast	.132
Craig Kimbrel	MB/Rome/Miss/Gwinnett	.150
Kris Medlen	Gwinnett	.157
Tommy Hanson	Gwinnett	.169
Lee Hyde	GCL/Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.172
Luis Avilan	Danville	.185
Cory Rasmus	Danville	.189
Brett Oberholtzer	Danville	.191
Tyler Stovall	Danville	.202

SAVES

Luis Valdez	Gwinnett	27
Cory Gearrin	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	19
Craig Kimbrel	MB/Rome/Miss/Gwinnett	18
Jaye Chapman	Rome/Myrtle Beach	13
Rafael Cruz	Mississippi/Gwinnett	13
Benino Pruneda	Rome/Myrtle Beach	9
Mariano Gomez	Gwinnett	8
Thomas Berryhill	Danville	6
Casey Hodges	Danville	6
Thomas Palica	Myrtle Beach	6
Matthew Small	Rome	6

WALKS PER 9 IP (MIN. 20 IP)

Brett Oberholtzer	Danville	0.99
Chris Masters	Danville	1.16
Matthew Crim	Danville	1.32
Jon Huber	Gwinnett	1.49
James Parr	Gwinnett/Gulf Coast	1.50
J.J. Hoover	Rome	1.67
Cory Gearrin	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	1.81
Zeke Spruill	Rome/Gulf Coast	1.92

How did you know he couldn't hit a slider?

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TICKET INFO

The Braves had not announced 2010 ticket information at press time. However, deposits of \$100 per seat are being accepted - not only for full season tickets, but also for half-season, weekend and 20-game plans at braves.com. Deposits also are being taken for group seats, suites and hospitality area space.

SPRING TRAINING

At press time, no ticket or schedule information was available for Braves spring training at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Watch future issues of *ChopTalk* or call (407) 939-GAME [4263] for information or visit disneyworldsports.disney.go.com or braves.com. The Braves usually report to spring training in mid-February and begin playing exhibition games at the end of February.



GIVE A GIFT CARD

Braves Gift Cards are available in denominations from \$25 to \$250 and can be used to purchase Tickets, Concessions and Merchandise.

To purchase Gift Cards or to obtain more information, visit Braves.com or the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center [call 404-523-5854].

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 600 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token (\$2) and \$5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for children and \$10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

OCTOBER - MARCH
Monday - Saturday

NOV. 27

DEC. 23-JAN. 2

JAN. 19

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday

Sunday

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

CLOSED

CLOSED

CLOSED

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

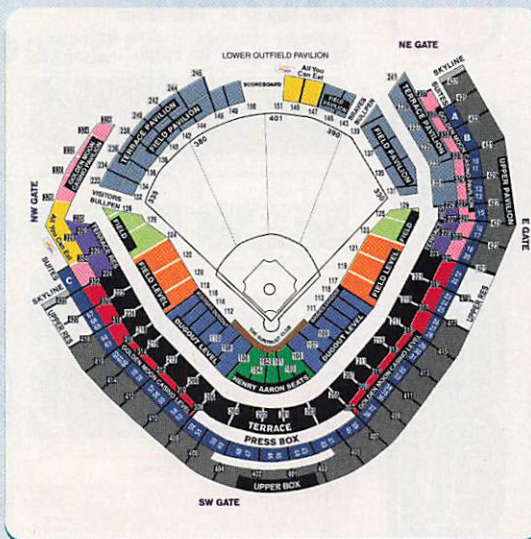
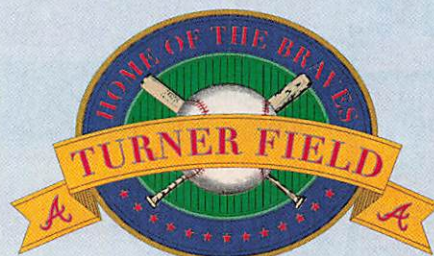
1 - 3 p.m.

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	\$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	\$7
MILITARY	\$7
GROUP	\$10
SCHOOL GROUP PRICES	
CHILDREN	\$5
ADULTS	\$7

*Subject to change

Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games



2010 SCHEDULE

APRIL

SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
GAME TIMES AND BROADCAST INFORMATION TO BE DETERMINED.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

HOME

AWAY

				1	2 CHI AL EXHIBITION	3 CHI AL EXHIBITION
4	5 CHC	6	7 CHC	8 CHC	9 SF	10 SF
11 SF	12 SD	13	14 SD	15 SD	16 COL	17 COL
18 COL	19	20 PHI	21 PHI	22 PHI	23 NYM	24 NYM
25 NYM	26 STL	27 STL	28 STL	29 STL	30 HOU	

MAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

						1 HOU
2 HOU	3	4 WAS	5 WAS	6 WAS	7 PHI	8 PHI
9 PHI	10 MIL	11 MIL	12 MIL	13	14 ARI	15 ARI
16 ARI	17 NYM	18 NYM	19 CIN	20 CIN	21 PIT	22 PIT
23 PIT	24	25 FLA	26 FLA	27 FLA	28 PIT	29 PIT
30 PIT	31 PHI					

JUNE

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		1 PHI	2 PHI	3 LA	4 LA	5 LA
6 LA	7 ARI	8 ARI	9 ARI	10 ARI	11 MIN	12 MIN
13 MIN	14	15 TAM	16 TAM	17 TAM	18 KC	19 KC
20 KC	21	22 CHI AL	23 CHI AL	24 CHI AL	25 DET	26 DET
27 DET	28 WAS	29 WAS	30 WAS			

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 FLA	3 FLA
4 FLA	5 PHI	6 PHI	7 PHI	8	9 NY	10 NY
11 NY	12	13 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM	14	15 MIL	16 MIL	17 MIL
18 MIL	19	20 SD	21 SD	22 SD	23 FLA	24 FLA
25 FLA	26	27 WAS	28 WAS	29 WAS	30 CIN	31 CIN

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 CIN	2 NYM	3 NYM	4 NYM	5 SF	6 SF	7 SF
8 SF	9 HOU	10 HOU	11 HOU	12	13 LA	14 LA
15 LA	16 LA	17 WAS	18 WAS	19 WAS	20 CHC	21 CHC
22 CHC	23 COL	24 COL	25 COL	26	27 FLA	28 FLA
29 FLA	30 NYM	31 NYM				

SEPT./OCT.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 NYM	2 NYM	3 FLA	4 FLA
5 FLA	6 PIT	7 PIT	8 PIT	9 STL	10 STL	11 STL
12 STL	13 WAS	14 WAS	15 WAS	16	17 NYM	18 NYM
19 NYM	20 PHI	21 PHI	22 PHI	23	24 WAS	25 WAS
26 WAS	27 FLA	28 FLA	29 FLA	30	1 PHI	2 PHI
3 PHI						

2010 SCHEDULE

HOME

AWAY

INDIVIDUAL STATS

FINAL

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
DIAZ	.313	125	371	56	116	18	4	13	58	181	35	90	12	5	.390	.488	3
PRADO	.307	128	450	64	138	38	0	11	49	209	36	59	1	3	.358	.464	7
INFANTE	.305	70	203	24	62	9	1	2	27	79	19	28	2	0	.361	.389	3
ESCOBAR	.299	141	528	89	158	26	2	14	76	230	57	62	5	4	.377	.436	13
MCCANN	.281	138	488	63	137	35	1	21	94	237	49	83	4	1	.349	.486	12
LAROCHE	.278	144	536	76	149	36	2	24	80	261	69	140	2	2	.357	.487	2
ATL	.325	57	212	30	69	11	1	12	40	118	28	59	0	0	.401	.557	1
ROSS	.273	54	128	18	35	9	0	7	20	65	21	39	0	0	.380	.508	1
CHURCH	.273	111	359	46	98	28	0	4	40	138	33	58	6	2	.338	.384	2
ATL	.260	44	127	20	33	12	0	2	18	51	16	22	0	0	.347	.402	1
ANDERSON	.268	135	496	52	133	27	0	13	61	199	27	73	1	0	.303	.401	4
JONES	.264	143	488	80	129	23	2	18	71	210	101	89	4	1	.388	.430	22
RIGHT	.289		159		46	11	1	9	33	86	22	28			.372	.541	
LEFT	.252		329		83	12	1	9	38	124	79	61			.395	.377	
MCLOUTH	.256	129	507	86	130	27	2	20	70	221	68	99	19	6	.352	.436	1
ATL	.257	84	339	59	87	20	1	11	36	142	47	70	12	6	.354	.419	1
JOHNSON	.224	106	303	47	68	20	3	8	29	118	32	54	7	2	.303	.389	10
SCHAFER	.204	50	167	18	34	8	0	2	8	48	27	63	2	1	.313	.287	0
CONRAD	.204	30	54	7	11	1	2	2	8	22	3	14	0	0	.259	.407	0
RIGHT	.222		9		2	0	0	1	2	5	1	4			.300	.556	
LEFT	.200		45		9	1	2	1	6	17	2	10			.250	.378	
GORECKI	.200	31	25	6	5	0	0	0	3	5	1	12	1	0	.222	.200	1
SAMMONS	.182	6	11	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	.250	.182	0
NORTON	.145	95	76	3	11	2	0	0	7	13	20	20	0	0	.330	.171	0
RIGHT	.286		14		4	1	0	0	3	5	4	4			.444	.357	
LEFT	.113		62		7	1	0	0	4	8	16	16			.304	.129	
ATLANTA	.263	162	5,539	735	1,459	300	20	149	700	2,246	602	1,064	58	26	.339	.405	96
OPPONENTS	.254	162	5,507	641	1,399	295	49	119	617	2,149	530	1,232	97	46	.323	.390	92

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Jones (.500-4-0-5), Church (.500-2-1-2), Escobar (.500-1-0-1), Infante (.429-6-0-4), Prado (.400-4-0-3), Johnson (.368-7-0-2), McCann (.333-4-0-2), Anderson (.273-3-1-4), Diaz (.267-4-0-1), Norton (.162-11-0-7), Conrad (.056-1-1-3), Ross (.000-0-0-0), Kawakami (.000-0-0-0), Medlen (.000-0-0-0), Vazquez (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.243-49-3-34).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hudson (.333-4-1-2), Lowe (.222-12-0-1), Vazquez (.176-12-0-3), Jurrjens (.123-8-0-4), Kawakami (.098-4-0-0), Hanson (.054-2-0-0), Acosta (.000-0-0-0), Carlyle (.000-0-0-0), Medlen (.000-0-0-0), Moylan (.000-0-0-0), O'Flaherty (.000-0-0-0). **STAFF** (.141-42-1-11).

KEY

AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

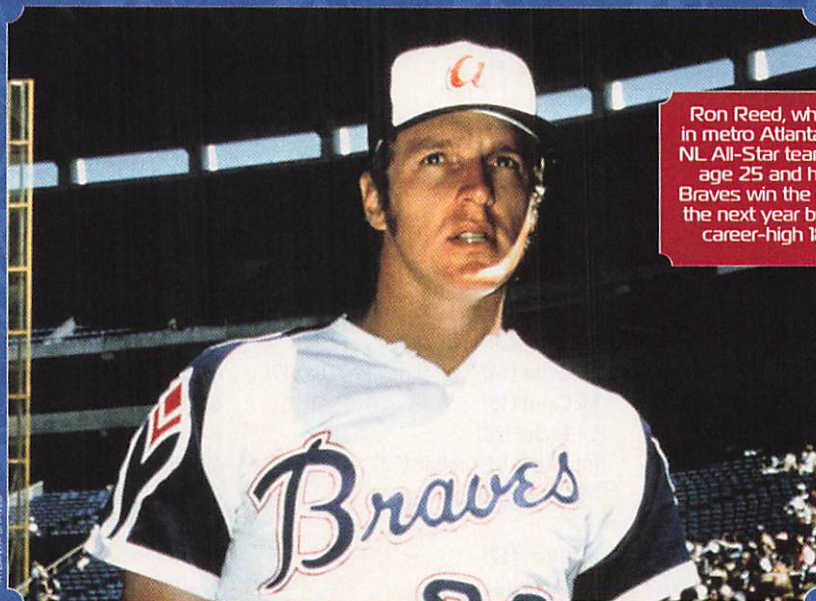
	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
GONZALEZ	5-4	2.42	80	0	29	10	74.1	56	28	20	7	7	33	90	5	.209
JURRJENS	14-10	2.60	34	34	0	0	215	186	71	62	15	3	75	152	3	.237
MOYLAN	6-2	2.84	87	0	6	0	73	65	29	23	0	2	35	61	1	.245
VAZQUEZ	15-10	2.87	32	32	0	0	219.1	181	75	70	20	4	44	238	6	.223
HANSON	11-4	2.89	21	21	0	0	127.2	105	42	41	10	5	46	116	2	.225
SORIANO	1-6	2.97	77	0	52	27	75.2	53	25	25	6	1	27	102	0	.194
O'FLAHERTY	2-1	3.04	78	0	8	0	56.1	52	23	19	2	6	18	39	2	.248
HUDSON	2-1	3.61	7	7	0	0	42.1	49	17	17	4	0	13	30	0	.295
KAWAKAMI	7-12	3.86	32	25	3	1	156.1	153	73	67	15	6	57	105	8	.260
CAMPILLO	1-0	4.15	5	0	4	0	4.1	7	3	2	0	0	3	3	0	.389
MEDLEN	3-5	4.26	37	4	10	0	67.2	65	34	32	5	2	30	72	3	.256
ACOSTA	1-1	4.34	36	0	17	0	37.1	45	19	18	4	2	19	32	3	.300
LOWE	15-10	4.67	34	34	0	0	194.2	232	109	101	16	4	63	111	4	.301
LOGAN	1-1	5.19	20	0	7	0	17.1	21	12	10	1	1	9	10	0	.292
CARLYLE	0-1	8.86	16	0	7	0	21.1	35	23	21	5	0	12	12	2	.380
NUNEZ	0-0	36.00	1	0	1	0	1	2	4	4	2	0	2	1	0	.400
ATLANTA	86-76	3.57	162	162	159	38	1,462.2	1,399	641	581	119	49	530	1,232	40	.254
OPPONENTS	76-86	4.09	162	162	159	40	1,459	1,459	735	663	149	52	602	1,064	37	.263

BY GAME

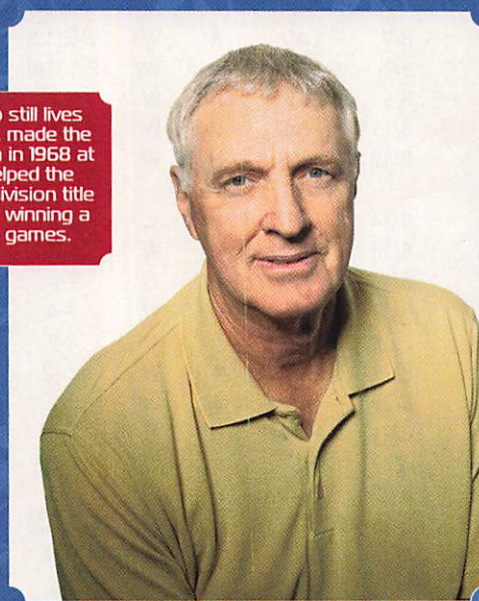
GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
1	4/5	PHI	A	W	4-1	Lowe (1-0)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1), Schafer (1)	1-0	1	+½
2	4/7	PHI	A	W	4-0	Jurrjens (1-0)	Johnson (1), Jones (1)	2-0	T-1	—
3	4/8	PHI	A	L	11-12	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (2), Schafer (2), Diaz (1)	2-1	3	-1
4	4/10	WAS	H	W	6-5 (10)	Campillo (1-0)	Escobar (1)	3-1	2	-1
5	4/11	WAS	H	W	5-3	Kawakami (1-0)	Johnson (2)	4-1	T-1	—
6	4/12	WAS	H	W	8-5	Jurrjens (2-0)	—	5-1	T-1	—
7	4/14	FLA	H	L	1-5	Vazquez (0-1)	Johnson (3)	5-2	2	-1
8	4/15	FLA	H	L	4-10	Moylan (0-1)	--	5-3	2	-2
9	4/16	FLA	H	L	2-6	Kawakami (1-1)	--	5-4	2	-3
10	4/17	PIT	A	L	0-3	Jurrjens (2-1)	--	5-5	T-2	-4
11	4/18	PIT	A	L	0-10	Reyes (0-1)	--	5-6	3	-5
12	4/19	PIT	A	W	11-1	Vazquez (1-1)	Prado (1), Ross (1)	6-6	T-2	-5
13	4/20	WAS	A	L	2-3	Lowe (1-1)	Diaz (2)	6-7	3	-5
14	4/21	WAS	A	L	3-4	Kawakami (1-2)	--	6-8	4	-5
15	4/22	WAS	A	W	1-0	Gonzalez (1-0)	--	7-8	2	-4
16	4/24	CIN	A	W	4-3	Vazquez (2-1)	Francoeur (2)	8-8	2	-3
17	4/25	CIN	A	W	10-2	Lowe (2-1)	Jones (2), Escobar (2)	9-8	2	-2
18	4/26	CIN	A	L	2-8	Kawakami (1-3)	Ross (2)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/27	STL	H	L	2-3	Jurrjens (2-2)	--	9-10	T-3	-2
20	4/28	STL	H	W	2-1	Moylan (1-1)	--	10-10	3	-2
21	4/29	STL	H	L	3-5	Vazquez (2-2)	--	10-11	3	-3
22	5/1	HOU	H	W	7-2	Lowe (3-1)	Francoeur (3)	11-11	3	-2 ½
23	5/2	HOU	H	L	1-5	Carlyle (0-1)	--	11-12	3	-2 ½
24	5/3	HOU	H	L	5-7	Moylan (1-2)	--	11-13	3	-2 ½
25	5/4	NYM	H	L	4-6	Vazquez (2-3)	Jones (3)	11-14	4	-3 ½
26	5/5	NYM	H	L	3-4	Kawakami (1-4)	--	11-15	4	-4
27	5/6	FLA	A	W	8-6	Lowe (4-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/7	FLA	A	W	4-2	Jurrjens (3-2)	Ross (3), Kotchman (1)	13-15	4	-2
29	5/8	PHI	A	L	6-10	Reyes (0-2)	Infante (1), Kotchman (2)	13-16	4	-3
30	5/9	PHI	A	W	6-2	Vazquez (3-3)	Escobar (3), McCann (3)	14-16	4	-2 ½
31	5/10	PHI	A	W	4-2	Kawakami (2-4)	--	15-16	4	-2 ½
32	5/11	NYM	A	W	8-3	Lowe (5-1)	--	16-16	4	-1 ½
33	5/12	NYM	A	L	3-4 (10)	Bennett (0-1)	--	16-17	4	-2 ½
34	5/13	NYM	A	W	8-7 (12)	Bennett (1-1)	Prado (2)	17-17	4	-1 ½
35	5/15	ARZ	H	W	4-3	Gonzalez (2-0)	Jones (4)	18-17	3	-2
36	5/16	ARZ	H	L	0-12	Kawakami (2-5)	--	18-18	3	-3
37	5/18	COL	H	L	1-5	Lowe (5-2)	--	18-19	3	-2 ½
38	5/19	COL	H	W	8-1	Jurrjens (4-2)	--	19-19	3	-2 ½
39	5/20	COL	H	W	12-4	Vazquez (4-3)	Escobar (4)	20-19	3	-1 ½
40	5/21	COL	H	L	0-9	Medlen (0-1)	--	20-20	3	-2 ½
41	5/22	TOR	H	W	1-0	Kawakami (3-5)	--	21-20	3	-2 ½
42	5/23	TOR	H	W	4-3	Lowe (6-2)	Johnson (4)	22-20	3	-1 ½
43	5/24	TOR	H	W	10-2	Bennett (2-1)	Johnson (5), McCann (2)	23-20	T-2	-1 ½
44	5/25	SF	A	L	2-8	Vazquez (4-4)	--	23-21	3	-1 ½
45	5/26	SF	A	L	0-4	Medlen (0-2)	--	23-22	3	-2 ½
46	5/27	SF	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (3-6)	--	23-23	3	-3
47	5/28	ARZ	A	L	2-5	Lowe (6-3)	--	23-24	3	-3 ½
48	5/29	ARZ	A	W	10-6	Jurrjens (5-2)	Escobar (5)	24-24	3	-3 ½
49	5/30	ARZ	A	L	2-3 (11)	Bennett (2-2)	--	24-25	3	-4
50	5/31	ARZ	A	W	9-3	Medlen (1-2)	Jones (5), Anderson (1)	25-25	3	-4
51	6/2	CHC	H	W	6-5 (12)	Soriano (1-0)	Anderson (2), Francoeur (4)	26-25	3	-4 ½
52	6/3	CHC	H	L	2-3 (11)	Bennett (2-2)	--	26-26	3	-5 ½
53	6/5	MIL	H	L	0-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	--	26-27	3	-6

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
54	6/6	MIL	H	L	0-3	Vazquez (4-5)	--	26-28	3	-6
55	6/7	MIL	H	W	8-7	O'Flaherty (1-0)	Jones 2 (7)	27-28	3	-6
56	6/8	PIT	H	W	7-6 (15)	Medlen (2-2)	Jones (8), McLouth (10), McCann (6)	28-28	3	-5 1/2
57	6/9	PIT	H	W	4-3	Lowe (7-3)	--	29-28	3	-4 1/2
58	6/10	PIT	H	L	2-3	Jurrjens (5-4)	Anderson (3)	29-29	3	-5 1/2
59	6/11	PIT	H	L	1-3	Soriano 1-1	--	29-30	3	-6 1/2
60	6/12	BAL	A	W	7-2	Hansen (1-0)	Escobar (6), Prado (3)	30-30	3	-5 1/2
61	6/13	BAL	A	L	4-8	O'Flaherty (1-1)	--	30-31	3	-5 1/2
62	6/14	BAL	A	L	2-11	Lowe (7-4)	Ross 2 (5)	30-32	4	-6 1/2
63	6/16	CIN	A	L	2-7	Jurrjens (5-5)	--	30-33	4	-6 1/2
64	6/17	CIN	A	L	3-4	Vazquez (4-6)	Escobar (7)	30-34	4	-6 1/2
65	6/18	CIN	A	W	7-0	Hanson (2-0)	Diaz (3), McLouth (11)	31-34	4	-5 1/2
66	6/19	BOS	A	W	8-2	Kawakami (4-6)	McLouth (12)	32-34	3	-4 1/2
67	6/20	BOS	A	L	0-3	Lowe (7-5)	--	32-35	4	-4 1/2
68	6/21	BOS	A	L	5-6	Bennett (2-4)	--	32-36	4	-4 1/2
69	6/22	CHC	H	W	2-0	Vazquez (5-6)	--	33-36	4	-4
70	6/23	NYN	H	W	4-0	Hanson (3-0)	McCann (7)	34-36	4	-4
71	6/24	NYN	H	L	4-8	Medlen (2-3)	Francoeur (5)	34-37	4	-4
72	6/25	NYN	H	L	7-11	Lowe (7-6)	McCann (8)	34-38	4	-4
73	6/26	BOS	H	L	1-4	Jurrjens (5-6)	Ross (6)	34-39	4	-4
74	6/27	BOS	H	L	0-1	Vazquez (5-7)	--	34-40	4	-5
75	6/28	BOS	H	W	2-1	Hanson (4-0)	Jones (9), Anderson (4)	35-40	4	-5
76	6/30	PHI	H	W	5-4 (10)	Moylan (2-2)	Prado (4)	36-40	4	-4
77	7/1	PHI	H	W	11-1	Jurrjens (6-6)	Diaz (4), Hernandez (1)	37-40	4	-3
78	7/2	PHI	H	W	5-2	Gonzalez (3-0)	Kotchman (3), Anderson (5)	38-40	4	-2
79	7/3	WAS	A	W	9-8	Logan (1-0)	Conrad (1)	39-40	T-3	-2
80	7/4	WAS	A	L	3-5	Gonzalez (3-1)	--	39-41	T-3	-3
81	7/5	WAS	A	L	3-5	Lowe (7-7)	McLouth (13)	39-42	T-3	-4
82	7/6	CHC	A	L	2-4	Jurrjens (6-7)	McLouth (14)	39-43	4	-5
83	7/7	CHC	A	W	2-1	Vazquez (6-7)	--	40-43	3	-4
84	7/8	CHC	A	W	4-1	Kawakami (5-6)	Kotchman (4)	41-43	3	-4
85	7/9	COL	A	L	6-7	Gonzalez (3-2)	--	41-44	3	-5
86	7/10	COL	A	W	4-1	Lowe (8-7)	--	42-44	3	-5
87	7/11	COL	A	W	4-3	Jurrjens (7-7)	--	43-44	3	-5
88	7/12	COL	A	L	7-8	Valdez (0-1)	Conrad (2)	43-45	3	-6
89	7/16	NYM	H	W	5-3	Acosta (1-0)	Escobar (8), Anderson (6)	44-45	3	-6
90	7/17	NYM	H	W	11-0	Jurrjens (8-7)	McCann (9), Prado (5)	45-45	T-2	-6
91	7/18	NYM	H	L	1-5	Kawakami (5-7)	Jones (10)	45-46	3	-6 1/2
92	7/19	NYM	H	W	7-1	Vazquez (7-7)	Escobar (9)	46-46	2	-6 1/2
93	7/20	SF	H	W	11-3	Hanson (5-0)	Anderson (7), Jones (11), Church (3)	47-46	2	-6 1/2
94	7/21	SF	H	W	8-1	Lowe (9-7)	McCann (10)	48-46	2	-6 1/2
95	7/22	SF	H	W	4-2	Jurrjens (9-7)	Escobar (10)	49-46	2	-5 1/2
96	7/23	SF	H	L	1-5	Gonzalez (3-3)	Escobar (11)	49-47	T-2	-6 1/2
97	7/24	MIL	A	W	9-4	Vazquez (8-7)	Prado (6), Jones (12), McLouth (15)	50-47	T-2	-5 1/2
98	7/25	MIL	A	L	0-4	Hanson (5-1)	--	50-48	T-2	-6 1/2
99	7/26	MIL	A	W	10-2	Lowe (10-7)	Kotchman (5), McCann (11), Johnson (6)	51-48	T-2	-6 1/2
100	7/28	FLA	A	L	3-4	Soriano (1-2)	Jones (13), Anderson (8)	51-49	3	-8
101	7/29	FLA	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (5-8)	Kotchman (6), Anderson (9)	51-50	3	-8
102	7/30	FLA	A	W	6-3 (10)	Moylan (3-2)	McCann (12)	52-50	3	-7
103	7/31	LAD	H	L	0-5	Hanson (5-2)	--	52-51	3	-8
104	8/1	LAD	H	W	4-3	Lowe (11-7)	--	53-51	3	-7
105	8/2	LAD	H	L	1-9	Jurrjens (9-8)	--	53-52	3	-7
106	8/3	SD	A	L	2-4	Kawakami (5-9)	LaRoche (14)	53-53	3	-7 1/2
107	8/4	SD	A	W	9-2	Vazquez (9-7)	Prado (7), Diaz (5)	54-53	3	-6 1/2
108	8/5	SD	A	W	6-2	Hanson (6-2)	--	55-53	3	-6 1/2
109	8/6	LAD	A	L	4-5	Soriano (1-3)	Jones (14)	55-54	3	-7 1/2

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
110	8/7	LAD	A	W	9-5 (12)	Moylan (4-2)	Johnson (7), Church (4)	56-54	3	-6 ½
111	8/8	LAD	A	W	2-1 (10)	Medlen (3-3)	Johnson (8)	57-54	3	-5 ½
112	8/9	LAD	A	W	8-2	Vazquez (10-7)	Diaz (6)	58-54	3	-4 ½
113	8/11	WAS	H	W	8-1	Hanson (7-2)	Jones (15)	59-54	3	-4 ½
114	8/12	WAS	H	W	6-2	Lowe (12-7)	Anderson (10), LaRoche 2 (16), Prado (8)	60-54	T-2	-4 ½
115	8/14	PHI	H	L	2-3	Soriano (1-4)	--	60-55	3	-6
116	8/15	PHI	H	W	4-3	Moylan (5-2)	McCann (13)	61-55	3	-5
117	8/16	PHI	H	L	1-4	Vazquez (10-8)	Diaz (7)	61-56	3	-6
118	8/17	ARZ	H	W	9-4	Hanson (8-2)	Anderson (11), LaRoche (17)	62-56	3	-5 ½
119	8/18	NYM	A	L	4-9	Lowe (12-8)	Diaz (8), LaRoche (18)	62-57	3	-6 ½
120	8/19	NYM	A	W	15-2	Jurrjens (10-8)	McCann (14), LaRoche (19), Diaz (9)	63-57	3	-6 ½
121	8/20	NYM	A	W	3-2	Kawakami (6-9)	McCann (15)	64-57	T-2	-6 ½
122	8/21	FLA	H	L	3-5	Vazquez (10-9)	LaRoche (20)	64-58	3	-6 ½
123	8/22	FLA	H	W	4-3	Hanson (9-2)	Infante (2), Escobar (12)	65-58	T-2	-6 ½
124	8/23	FLA	H	W	7-5	Moylan (6-2)	McCann (16)	66-58	2	-6 ½
125	8/25	SD	H	L	1-2 (12)	Medlen (3-4)	--	66-59	T-2	-7
126	8/26	SD	H	L	5-12	Kawakami (6-10)	McCann (17)	66-60	3	-8
127	8/27	SD	H	W	9-1	Vazquez (11-9)	LaRoche (21)	67-60	T-2	-7
128	8/28	PHI	A	L	2-4	Hanson (9-3)	--	67-61	T-2	-8
129	8/29	PHI	A	W	9-1 (8)	Lowe (13-8)	Anderson (12), Diaz (10), Escobar (13), Jones (16)	68-61	2	-7
130	8/30	PHI	A	L	2-3	Jurrjens (10-9)	Prado (9)	68-62	T-2	-8
131	8/31	FLA	A	W	5-2	Kawakami (7-10)	--	69-62	2	-7 ½
132	9/1	FLA	A	W	4-3	Hudson (1-0)	--	70-62	2	-7 ½
133	9/2	FLA	A	L	7-8	Gonzalez (3-4)	Escobar (14)	70-63	2	-7 ½
134	9/3	FLA	A	L	3-8	Medlen (3-5)	McCann (18)	70-64	T-2	-8 ½
135	9/4	CIN	H	L	1-3	Lowe (13-9)	McLouth (16)	70-65	3	-8 ½
136	9/5	CIN	H	L	1-3	Jurrjens (10-10)	--	70-66	3	-8 ½
137	9/6	CIN	H	L	2-4 (12)	Kawakami (7-11)	Ross (7)	70-67	3	-8 ½
138	9/8	HOU	A	W	2-1	Vazquez (12-9)	LaRoche (22), McLouth (17)	71-67	3	-8
139	9/9	HOU	A	L	1-2	Soriano (1-5)	--	71-68	3	-9
140	9/10	HOU	A	W	9-7	Lowe (14-9)	McLouth (18)	72-68	3	-8
141	9/11	STL	A	W	1-0	Jurrjens (11-10)	--	73-68	3	-8
142	9/12	STL	A	W	7-6	Gonzalez (4-4)	Hudson (1)	74-68	3	-7
143	9/13	STL	A	W	9-2	Vazquez (13-9)	LaRoche (23)	75-68	3	-7 ½
144	9/15	NYM	H	W	6-0	Hanson (10-3)	LaRoche 2 (25)	76-68	3	-7 ½
145	9/16	NYM	H	W	6-5	O'Flaherty (2-1)	--	77-68	3	-7 ½
146	9/17	NYM	H	W	7-3	Jurrjens (12-10)	McCann (19)	78-68	2	-7 ½
147	9/18	PHI	H	L	4-9	Hudson (1-1)	Prado (10), McCann (20)	78-69	3	-8 ½
148	9/19	PHI	H	W	6-4	Vazquez (14-9)	Diaz (11)	79-69	3	-7 ½
149	9/20	PHI	H	L	2-4	Hanson (10-4)	--	79-70	3	-8 ½
150	9/21	NYM	A	W	11-3	Lowe (15-9)	Anderson (13), Diaz (12), Jones (17)	80-70	T-2	-8
151	9/22	NYM	A	W	3-1	Jurrjens (13-10)	--	81-70	2	-7 ½
152	9/23	NYM	A	W	5-2	Hudson (2-1)	--	82-70	2	-6 ½
153	9/25	WAS	A	W	4-1	Vazquez (15-9)	Prado (11)	83-70	2	-6
154	9/26	WAS	A	W	11-5	Hanson (11-4)	McCann (21)	84-70	2	-5
155	9/27	WAS	A	W	6-3 (10)	Gonzalez (5-4)	--	85-70	2	-5
156	9/28	FLA	H	W	4-0	Jurrjens (14-10)	Jones (18)	86-70	2	-4
157	9/29	FLA	H	L	4-5	Kawakami (7-12)	Diaz (13)	86-71	2	-5
158	9/30	FLA	H	L	4-5	Vazquez (15-10)	--	86-72	2	-6
159	10/1	WAS	H	L	1-2	Soriano (1-6)	McLouth (19)	86-73	2	-6
160	10/2	WAS	H	L	3-6	Lowe (15-10)	--	86-74	T-2	-6
161	10/3	WAS	H	L	4-6 (11)	Acosta (1-1)	--	86-75	3	-6
162	10/4	WAS	H	L	1-2 (15)	Logan (1-1)	McLouth (20)	86-76	3	-7



Ron Reed, who still lives in metro Atlanta, made the NL All-Star team in 1968 at age 25 and helped the Braves win the division title the next year by winning a career-high 18 games.



MULTI-TALENTED

Former Pitcher And Basketball Star Ron Reed Helping Non-Profits Raise Funds

BY BRIAN KNAPP

DENNIS COOPER only had to ask once. When the one-time chairman of the RTM Restaurant Group offered former Braves pitcher Ron Reed a position that would afford him the opportunity to "raise money for kids," Reed leaped at the chance. He has the heart and hands of a philanthropist.

"I was working for a refinancing company," Reed said. "We'd been close friends, and he asked me if I'd be interested in working for him. He didn't have to say anything else."

The RTM Restaurant Group – which owned some 800 Arby's restaurants nationwide, along with the entire Mrs. Winner's franchise – established the Arby's Charity Tour, which has raised more than \$20 million for various charities since its inception. Ultimately, RTM sold out and Cooper departed, taking Reed with him. He established Cooper Atlanta and, with it, a company known as Marketing Event Partners (MVP), Inc.

As MVP's director of memorabilia and ancillary events, Reed puts together items – including shadowboxes and autograph pieces from prominent athletes, political figures and other celebrities – for numerous non-profit fundraising auctions.

"It's not rocket science, but it's rather challenging," Reed said. "We want to put together things you can't go buy anywhere else. Most of our items are pretty rare and unique. No auction has to buy anything they get from us. It's kind of a win-win situation. Items are put on consignment. The only way an auction pays for it, is if the item sells."

The position provides Reed, now 65, with daily fulfillment.

"I really enjoy trying to put various things together for auction items," he said. "To keep up fresh ideas, it can be a challenge. We've probably done 25-30 auctions the last few years. We're in the building stages right now. There are a lot of possibilities."

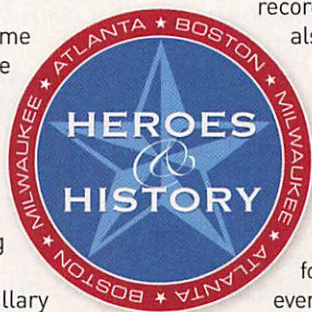
The 6-foot-6 Reed was a decorated college basketball player at Notre Dame. He was one of 25 players named to the school's all-century team in 2005, and he still holds the Fighting Irish season record for most rebounds per game (17.7 in 1963-64). He also enjoyed a brief stint in the NBA with the Detroit Pistons (1965-67), and retired from baseball after 17 seasons in 1985. His athletic ambitions did not end there, however. At 41, he sought new mountains to climb.

"I took up golf during my playing days with the Pistons," Reed said. "I had a wild dream when baseball ended – I'd play golf, get good enough to qualify for one PGA Champions Tour (for players 50 and older) event, and earn a check as a golfer. There'd never been an athlete who'd made money in three pro sports."

Reality set in after several failed attempts.

"I tried three or four times, and I found out I wasn't as good as I thought I was," Reed said. "I never qualified. I missed by two or three shots. In these tournaments, there are usually 130 to 140 guys, and they only take the top two or three."

Reed pitched in three different decades for four teams (Cardinals, Phillies and White Sox), including the Braves. He debuted with Atlanta in September 1966, little more than a year after the Braves drafted him out of Notre Dame, and he became a full-time starter in 1968 when he earned his only All-Star appear-



ance. The righthander enjoyed his best season in 1969, when he posted 18 wins, pitched seven complete games, and recorded a career-high 160 strikeouts to help the Braves win their first division title (NL West) and first post-season appearance in Atlanta.

Reed won 80 games in parts of 10 seasons with the Braves (1966-75) and established strong ties to the community, including a lifelong friendship with a certain Hall of Fame knuckleballer.

"My best friend on the planet is Phil Niekro," Reed said. "We still play golf once every few weeks. He never got a World Series ring, but he got a Hall of Fame ring. They're pretty close. If I had my choice, the one thing in the world I might trade my World Series ring for is a Hall of Fame ring."

In 1979, Reed led major league relievers with 13 wins, and the next year, he won his ring as a reliever with the Phillies. It remains one of two centerpieces of his professional career. He was also the pitcher of record when Hank Aaron passed Babe Ruth as the game's all-time home run leader at Atlanta Stadium in 1974.

"You play the game of baseball for one thing - to win a World Series - and I got to do that with the Phillies in 1980," said Reed, who also pitched in the 1983 World Series with the Phillies. "The night Hank hit 715, I was the starting and winning pitcher for the Braves. That was special, because I was there and saw what Hank had to go through."

Reed finished his career at 146-140 with a 3.46 ERA and struck out more than twice as many batters (1,481) than he walked (633). He also notched 103 saves, when he became a dependable reliever late in his career (1976). In 1975, which he split between the Braves and Cardinals, he made 34 starts yet allowed just 5 home runs to lead the NL in fewest home runs per 9 innings (0.2).

Besides Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley and John Smoltz, he's the only other pitcher to have 100 wins, 100 saves and 50 complete games. He's one of just eight pitchers to have 100 wins and 100 saves (Eckersley, Smoltz, Elroy Face, Rich Gossage, Hoyt Wilhelm, Dave Giusti and Bob Stanley).

"I was definitely not a superstar, maybe a little bit above mediocre," Reed said. "You have to have a little talent and a lot of luck to play for 17 years."

A native of LaPorte, Ind., Reed resides in Lilburn, Ga., just outside Atlanta, with his wife of 38 years, Julie. They have two grown daughters. For information on Marketing Event Partners Inc., visit marketingeventpartners.com.

Memories

BY STEVE FALL

ONE HANSON CARD VALUED AT \$300

BASEBALL CARD collectors are always looking for the next great phenom. They've had Tommy Hanson on their radar for some time.

"He was a big prospect before he came up. So, card collectors knew who he was, and they were anticipating him," said Clay Luraschi, spokesperson for card manufacturer Topps. "He has lived up to his hype, which doesn't always happen. But he's one of those rare guys who comes up and performs right away and puts up All-Star type numbers in his rookie year."

Already, there are 140 different Hanson cards available, although many of those have minor differences such as the border color. Small quantities get printed of select cards, making them difficult to find.

For example, only 50 serial-numbered copies were made of Hanson's 2007 Bowman Chrome Prospects Gold Refractors card (above). Chris Olds, the editor for Beckett Baseball and Beckett Graded Card Investor, estimates the value at approximately \$300. The regular version of this card sells for about \$10.

Hanson's 2009 Topps Chrome rookie card ranks among the hottest right now with collectors, according to Olds. Among active stars, it rivals the rookie cards of Derek Jeter and Albert Pujols in popularity.

"It doesn't hurt that it comes autographed. He signed an unannounced number of these cards, and it sells for roughly \$60," said Olds. "An autographed rookie card is found in every 24-pack hobby box. There are 24 different autographs, so you have roughly a one in 24 chance of finding Hanson's card."

When it comes to rookie cards, two Milwaukee Braves Hall of Famers rank among the most valuable ever made by Topps.

"The Braves have a long history of great players. In turn with greatness, your trading cards are great," said Luraschi. "The Eddie Mathews 1952 Topps card is one of the most valuable cards in the set. The Hank Aaron rookie card from 1954 is one of the most sought after. Those two sluggers, their rookie cards are two of the most highly-prized Topps rookie cards ever created."

The Mathews card shows the third baseman wearing a Boston Braves cap, since his rookie year coincided with the team's final season there. It also refers to him as "Ed Mathews."

Chipper Jones' rookie cards sell for just \$5 or so, according to Olds. That has nothing to do with Jones. His rookie cards were printed when a lot more cards were made, which lowers their value. Olds expects added interest once Chipper retires. Jones has always been popular with collectors, especially since he's virtually certain to have a plaque at Cooperstown.

"Hall of Famers will always be collectible," said Luraschi. "You have fans and collectors who will try to collect anything with one particular player on the card, regardless of how many copies. They'll try to collect everything of that player."

They have their work cut out with Jones. Olds estimates that more than 8,800 different cards exist for him.



 Braves Hall of Fame announcer **Ernie Johnson** (RHP, 1950-58) was selected as a member of the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame's class of 2010. He and six others will be honored at the organization's induction ceremony in Macon in February.

 A gallery of pictures chosen by **Hank Aaron** (OF/1B, 1954-74) for LIFE.com can be seen at life.com/image/first/in-gallery/24671 in commemoration of his last game in the majors (Oct. 3, 1976). The photos include not only many of the greatest players in history, but also some of the greatest Braves, including **Warren Spahn** (LHP, 1942, '46-64), **Lou Burdette** (RHP, 1951-63), **Eddie Mathews** (3B, 1952-66) and **Joe Adcock** (1B, 1953-62), as well as **Charlie Grimm** (1952-56), Aaron's first manager in the majors, 1957 World Championship manager **Fred Haney** (1956-59), **Dusty Baker** (OF, 1968-75) and **Satchel Paige** (1968) and **Bob Gibson** (1982-84), who were Braves coaches.

Aaron was scheduled to speak at the Galloway School in Atlanta on Oct. 20, discussing his days as a professional baseball player, his role in the civil rights movement, the Chasing the Dream Foundation, and his community activism and efforts to support underprivileged youth.

 **Edgar Renteria** (SS, 2006-07) underwent arthroscopic surgery to remove bone spurs and chips from his right elbow Sept. 26.

 The Dodgers' **Will Ohman** (LHP, 2008) underwent shoulder surgery Sept. 29 after working just 12 1/3 innings for the season.

 **Phil Niekro** (RHP, 1964-83, '87) participated in the Ninth District Republican Party's first Golf Tournament at Lanier Golf Club in Cumming, Ga., on Oct. 6.

 The Guilford County (N.C.) Sports Hall of Fame inducted nine new members, including the late **Dick Culler** (SS, 1944-47) Sept. 21.

 The Red Sox designated **Chris Woodward** (INF, 2007) for assignment and then outrighted him to Triple-A Pawtucket.

 **Don Thompson** (OF, 1949) died Sept. 28, in Asheville, N.C., at the age of 85.

 The late **Jesse Barnes** (RHP, 1915-17, '23-25) was inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame Oct. 4.

 The Mets announced that **Sandy Alomar** (2B/SS, 1964-66) would not return as bench coach but would be offered another position with the organization.

 **Marcus Giles** (2B, 2001-06) was arrested Oct. 7 in El Cajon, Calif., for suspicion of domestic battery involving his wife, Tracy.

 **Rafael Furcal's** (SS, 2000-05) family had to evacuate his home temporarily Aug. 31 due to the large wildfire near Los Angeles when he was out of town with the Dodgers.

 **Russ Oritz** (RHP, 2003-04) was released by the Yankees Aug. 17 and then signed a minor league contract with Colorado, only to be released Aug. 23.

 **Billy Sullivan**, former publicity director of the Boston Braves, was inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame Aug. 20. Sullivan was the founder of the franchise in 1960 and a driving force in the NFL-AFL merger in 1970.

 **Earl Averill** (OF, 1941), **Frank Demaree** (OF, 1941-42) and **Johnny Moore** (scout who signed Hall of Fame third baseman Eddie Mathews), were named to the Pacific Coast League Hall of Fame.

 At the Minor League Baseball promotional seminar Oct. 3 in New Orleans, the Mobile BayBears (Arizona Diamondbacks, Double A) received both the "best non-game promotion" and "best overall promotion" awards for the Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) Childhood Home and Museum.

* BIRTHDAYS *

NOVEMBER

1 ST	CHICO RUIZ (58)
2 ND	GEORGE ESTOCK (85) RON REED (67) TOM PACIOREK (63) YUNEL ESCOBAR (27)
3 RD	GARRY HILL (63)
4 TH	TITO FRANCONA (76) CHRIS RESOP (27)
5 TH	CRAIG MCMURTRY (50) JAVY LOPEZ (39)
6 TH	BOB ADDIS (84) DON WENGERT (40) JUSTIN SPEIER (36) ADAM LAROCHE (30)
7 TH	CLARENCE JONES (68) RUSS SPRINGER (41) TRAVIS SMITH (37)
8 TH	DWIGHT SMITH (46) JEFF BLAUSER (44)
9 TH	BOB GIBSON (74) DION JAMES (47) CHUCK JAMES (28)
10 TH	GENE CONLEY (79) BILL SOUTHWORTH (64) ANDRES THOMAS (46) KEITH LOCKHART (45) MICAH BOWIE (35) ROBERTO HERNANDEZ (45)
11 TH	JODY DAVIS (53)
12 TH	GENE GARBER (62)
13 TH	DAN PETRY (51)
15 TH	NORMIE ROY (81) JACK SMITH (74) RICK LUECKEN (49) PEDRO BORBON (42) KEVIN GRYBOSKI (36)
16 TH	FRANK BOLLING (78) DREW DENSON (44)
17 TH	DAN OSINSKI (76) AUBREY GATEWOOD (71) ELI MARRERO (36)
18 TH	GARY SHEFFIELD (41)
19 TH	JOE MORGAN (79) TED TURNER (71)
20 TH	JAY RITCHIE (73) HERMAN STARRETTE (71) DUANE THEISS (56) KEVIN LOMON (38) J.D. DREW (34) JO-JO REYES (25)
21 ST	MARK EICHHORN (49) BARBARO CANIZARES (30)
22 ND	WADE BLASINGAME (66) RICK MATULA (56) OSCAR VILLARREAL (28)
23 RD	FRANK TEPEDINO (62) BROOK JACOBY (50) AARON SMALL (38)
24 TH	DAMIAN MOSS (33) HORACIO RAMIREZ (30)
25 TH	MARK WHITEN (43) OCTAVIO DOTEI (36)
26 TH	JAY HOWELL (54) BOB WALK (53)
27 TH	KEN RAY (35)
28 TH	WALT WEISS (46) JOHN BURKETT (45) ADAM BERNERO (33)
30 TH	JUAN BERENGUER (55) STEVE SHIELDS (51) CRAIG WILSON (33)



SUBSCRIPTIONS

P.O. Box 81247
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PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
WEB Braves.com/choptalk

PUBLISHER

GARY CARUSO, President
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EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Gary Caruso

COLUMNISTS: Jay Busbee, Bobby Cox,
Brian McCann, Patty Rasmussen,
Todd Redmond, Ken Rosenthal
(FoxSports.com), Frank Wren

REPORTERS: Bill Ballew, Jay Busbee,
Jon Cooper, Steve Fall, Ray Glier,
Melanie D.G. Kaplan, Brian Knapp,
Patty Rasmussen

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Tom Priddy, Patty
Rasmussen, Carlos Restrepo, Bill Setliff,
Allison Shirreffs, Walter Victor, Rodger
Wood

CARTOONIST: Johnny Sajem

PRODUCTION

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OFFICE OF PUBLICATION

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E-MAIL Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

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ATLANTA BRAVES STAFF

PUBLIC RELATIONS

BRAD HAINJE - Director of Media Relations
BETH MARSHALL - Director of Public Relations
ANDY PRESSLEY - Publications Manager
Adam Liberman, Meagan Swingle,
Adrienne Midgley

IN FRANK WE TRUST

IT'S AT THIS JUNCTURE each year when many baseball fans ponder the proverbial question: "Is the glass half full or half empty?" when examining their favorite team's immediate future.

No serious Braves fan should think his or her glass is anything less than "at least half full."

Though there's certainly no guarantee that the Braves will end their four-year playoff drought next season, the remarkably rich starting rotation alone provides reason to believe they'll at least be in the thick of contention again when they try to give Bobby Cox a championship sendoff.

Granted, Frank Wren must find a way to beef up the lineup and to rebuild the bullpen if he doesn't re-sign free agents Rafael Soriano and/or Mike Gonzalez. But the Braves provided plenty of evidence in the second half that given the regular presence of bats such as Adam LaRoche, Martin Prado, Matt Diaz and Nate McLouth, who all played sparingly or on other teams most of the first half, there's enough artillery to cause serious damage to other teams - even with Chipper Jones in the throes of his worst season.

Wren has the Braves well on the way back to being the type of club ChopTalk readers grew accustomed to watching from 1991-2005. There's no reason to believe, given his excellent work in the past year, that he won't deliver the goods again this winter.

Wren took a ridiculous and unjust amount of criticism for some of his moves last year, most notably severing ties with John Smoltz and Tom Glavine. But he did what he had to do, and in the end it was proven that he did the right things. He made a couple of very tough decisions, and the Braves had a good season because of them.

Those of you with good memories and good reading habits might remember that in this space in the March ChopTalk, the "Answer Man" who visits us occasionally predicted that Wren would be the MVP of the 2009 Braves. He was unavailable this month, probably because he didn't want to be reminded of the things he predicted that didn't pan out as he said. However, he

asked that I remind all of you what he did say about Wren at a time when he was being second-guessed in the media about allowing Smoltz to get away.

Fans eventually saw Wren's wisdom in signing pitchers who were ready to contribute from the opener. And later came Tommy Hanson, who made the critics suddenly forget their censure of Wren for letting Glavine go.

Though Wren will be busy this off-season, he doesn't think the challenges are as great as a year ago when he performed what may be the best "overnight" rebuilding of a starting rotation in modern baseball history.

"I don't think the work we have to do this off-season is as daunting as it was a year ago," he said. "A lot of things are in place, and we have the foundation of an outstanding offense."

"When I look at the guys I consider .300 hitters who are becoming more professional hitters all the time - (Brian) McCann, (Martin) Prado, (Yunel) Escobar, Chipper (Jones), who I've got to believe will bounce back, (Matt) Diaz and (Nate) McLouth - that's a pretty good foundation, along with whatever happens at first base and right field."

"We're going to have to do some rebuilding of the bullpen, whether we sign our guys or go into the marketplace. But we developed some guys over the course of the year - (Peter) Moylan was coming off elbow surgery, and (Eric) O'Flaherty was a waiver claim that our guys did a great job of identifying. Boone Logan is someone Bobby and Roger (McDowell) think will be a force, a guy we can depend on. There's a good foundation in the bullpen, too, but we have to figure out how we're going to finish games (closer)."

Who will play first base? How will the outfield fill out? Who will close? They're all important questions, but with the starting rotation in place, they seem like questions Wren can answer well enough to make the Braves a serious force in 2010.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Oct. 16. The December issue will be mailed Nov. 19.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



AMAZING RACE



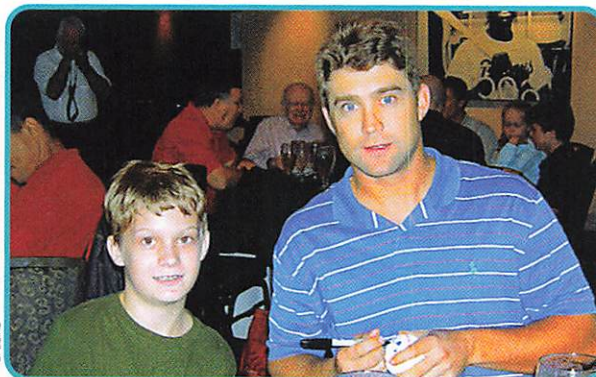
PETER MOYLAN, Tommy Hanson and Kris Medlen were guests of NASCAR driver - and Moylan's fellow Aussie - **Marcus Ambrose** at the race at Atlanta Motor Speedway Sept. 6. The three pitchers watched the race from pit row. "It was really cool because we wore headphones and were able to hear what the drivers were saying," said Hanson. Because the race was run at night, the players were able to attend it after the Sunday afternoon game against Cincinnati.

NASCAR driver Marcus Ambrose welcomes (L-R) Kris Medlen, Peter Moylan and Tommy Hanson to the pits at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

TRADITIONAL ROOKIE HAZING took place as the team left Turner Field, Sept. 20, for their last road trip of the season. **Kenshin Kawakami**, though 34 years old, was still a rookie in the majors and thus was forced to dress as a ninja, as was his interpreter, **Daichi Takasue**. Kawakami had a good time with the fans lining the sidewalk leading to the bus as he brandished his ninja sword at them. He was probably relieved since he got off relatively easy compared to the other rookies. **Reid Gorecki** was dressed like a baby, complete with a pacifier, a baby bonnet and an oversized diaper. **Tommy Hanson**, **Kris Medlen** and **Brooks Conrad** wore Speedo swimsuits, goggles, swim caps, water wings and cut off t-shirts reading "Peanut Proud." "We were standing in the doorway waiting to go out to the bus and I said, 'If we're gonna do this, let's do it all the way,'" said Medlen. He and Hanson then joined hands, waving to fans as they walked to the bus. They had to remain in costume as they walked through the airport in New York. Medlen said he and Hanson went to Times Square to try to get something to eat while still dressed in their hazing gear, but were unable to find a restaurant that would seat them. They hailed a cab, not an easy task in Speedos, and returned to the hotel to change clothes...

A group of Braves wives and former Braves wives met for lunch on Sept. 29 to catch up as the season wound down. The informal lunch date included **Ashley McCann**, **Kim Hudson**, **Jenn LaRoche**, **Nicole Jones** (**Andruw**, Texas Rangers), and **Catie Francoeur** (**Jeff**, Mets). Kim and Jenn also did some shopping at Uptown Girl, the boutique owned by Ashley...

Dave LaRoche, father of **Adam LaRoche**, visited his son during the final week of the season. Dave managed to make



Reid Gorecki, signing an autograph for 11-year-old Matt Cavanagh, was one of three players that attended the Braves 400 Fan Club's Callups Luncheon at the 755 Club.

friends with the manager of the SunTrust Club and score passes to the club, watching several innings of several games from the exclusive seats...

Members of the rock group NeedtoBreathe visited the Braves clubhouse and batting practice Sept. 30. **Matt Diaz** attended their concert the following night after the game. Diaz and his brother, **Jonny**, a Christian music artist, discussed their faith and their careers in an interview filmed on Sept. 28 with the Atlanta-based Gospel Music Channel. The interview will be broadcast in the upcoming months...

Ryan Church and his wife, **Tina**, welcomed their second child, a daughter, **Madison Noel**, on Oct. 2. The couple also has a son, **Mason**. Church received permission from **Bobby Cox** to return to his home in Florida that morning in order to be on



hand for his daughter's birth. He remained in Florida rather than returning to Atlanta for the final two games of the season...

Kris Medlen, who picked up bass fishing during spring training in Orlando, planned to do some serious fishing in the first few weeks of the off-season. Medlen went fishing in the Gulf of Mexico the weekend of Oct. 16-18 and flew to Wisconsin with his roommate, Braves minor league pitcher **Ryne Reynoso**, to fish for muskie from Oct. 25-29...

Matt Diaz and his family, wife **Leslee** and children **Nathan** and **Anna**, drove to Valle Crucis, in the high Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina for a family vacation the weekend after the season ended. They were joined by Leslee's father and her brother's family...

Brian McCann and his wife, **Ashley**, have a busy social calendar mixed in with some much-deserved, yet-to-be-scheduled down time. The couple will attend a few destination weddings, including one in Las Vegas,

and will host the Rally Foundation's Benefit Bash on Nov. 12 at The Retreat of Dunwoody. This year's theme is "New York Nightclub." On Nov. 13, they'll host a celebrity softball game at **Russ Chandler** Baseball Stadium at Georgia Tech. Tickets are available for \$10. Visit rallyfoundation.org for more information. McCann and **Chipper Jones** will coach the celebrity softball teams...

Buddy Carlyle and his wife, **Jessica**, are taking a weekend trip to Las Vegas, Nov. 20-23...

Nolan Fontana, grandson of Braves Hall of Fame pitcher, the late, great **Lou Burdette**, is a freshman at the University of Florida. A shortstop, Nolan has become friends with another freshman, **Cody Dent**, the son of former New York Yankees All-Star shortstop **Bucky Dent**. They were in the University of Florida's 2009 class, named the top recruiting class in the nation by Collegiate Baseball...

Jean Berken, a member of the board of

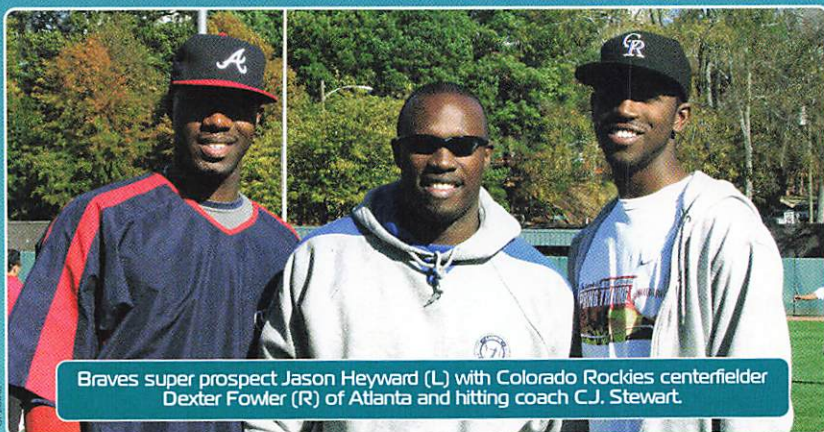
directors of the Braves 400 Fan Club and hostess of the club's monthly baseball book club, and her nephew, **Matthew Cavanagh**, 11, attended the 400 Fan Club's annual September Callups Luncheon on Sept. 19, at the 755 Club at Turner Field. **Clint Sammons**, **Brooks Conrad** and **Reid Gorecki** attended the event, sitting with fans and answering questions.

HEAD START

OUTFIELDER-OF-THE-FUTURE

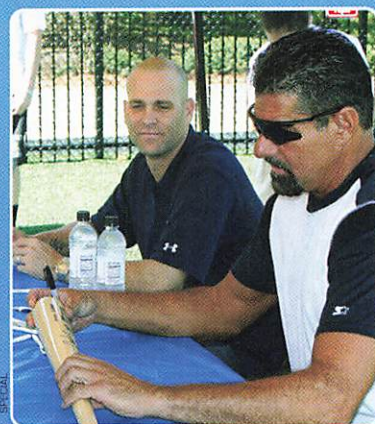
Jason Heyward, twice named the over-all Minor League Player of the Year for '09, has already started down the road to good works. Heyward is on the Professional Players Board of L.E.A.D., (Launch, Expose, Advise, Direct), an organization seeking to increase the number of inner city-teens, ages 14-18, playing competitive baseball in high school for the purpose of preparing them to compete for college baseball

scholarships. Heyward will be on hand at Turner Field, Nov. 7, for L.E.A.D.'s 3rd Annual Celebrity Clinic. The organization was founded by **C.J. Stewart**, an Atlanta native and former Chicago Cubs outfielder who has been Heyward's personal hitting instructor since he was 14 years old. The clinic invites 100 young men selected from metro Atlanta schools and service organizations, such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs, to attend.



Braves super prospect Jason Heyward (L) with Colorado Rockies centerfielder Dexter Fowler (R) of Atlanta and hitting coach C.J. Stewart.

PITCHING IN



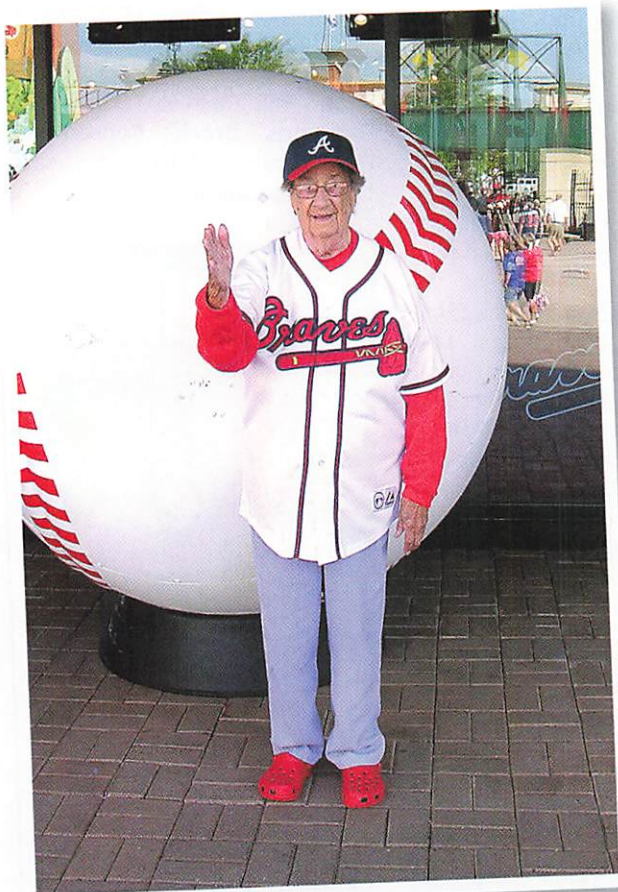
Tim Hudson (L) watches Steve Bedrosian sign a bat.

THE HUDSON Family Foundation (HFF) continued to send volunteers to charitable events in the area, both to fulfill the foundation's mission of assisting local families and to raise their profile in the community. The HFF was a sponsor of Team Colin's 1st Annual Baseball Family Fun Day featuring the Knock CF Out of the Park Home Run Derby to raise funds and awareness of Cystic Fibrosis (CF). The event, which raised \$10,000, was held Oct. 3 at Home Plate, a baseball/softball complex in Peachtree City. **Tim Hudson** and **Steve "Bedrock" Bedrosian**, former Braves pitcher (1981-85, '93-95) and 1987 Cy Young Award winner (with the Phillies), were on hand to sign autographs. Team Colin was founded by **Chris** and **Samantha DePriest** after their infant son, Colin, was diagnosed with CF in October 2008.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



MAMA KNOWS BEST

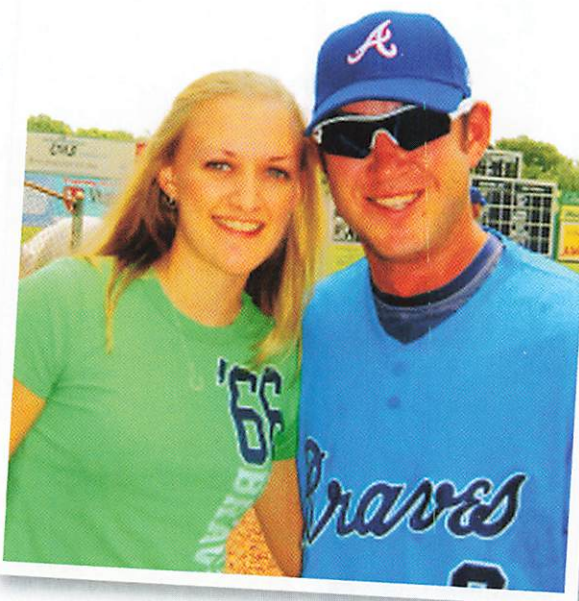
This is a picture of my mom (Margaret Lytchfield of Camden, S.C.), who will be 95 on Nov. 18. Mama is a hardcore Braves fan. She never misses a game, and her favorite magazine is ChopTalk. This picture was taken two years ago at a Braves game. We had lunch at the 755 Club, then had a great time watching the Braves win. Two weeks later, she fell and broke her hip, and the surgeon told her she would be in the hospital/rehab for about six weeks. She told him, "Well, if I'm going to have to be in bed for that long, thank goodness it's baseball season and I can watch my Braves." Last winter through a mutual friend, I met Tim Hudson and told him what an avid fan Mama was, and he wrote her a note. The note and a picture of Tim are framed and hanging in her dining room. Mama has other Braves memorabilia throughout the house and a large Braves flag in the backyard that she can see from her kitchen window and when she sits on her deck. When Mama was in her middle 80s, we gave her a computer, and the first thing she searched for was the Braves' website, which is now her homepage. When you talk to Mama, you would think she knew all of the players personally, and when she chats with family or friends, one of the first things anybody asks her about are the Braves.

NANCY L. ROBERTS
Tyrone, Ga.

ONE FOR THE AGES

I have so many special Braves memories that it wouldn't be possible to name all of them. My grandmother, parents and brothers have shared so many special times at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium and Turner Field. On May 27, my grandmother and I went to the Rickwood Classic in Birmingham to see the Mississippi Braves and the Birmingham Barons at 99-year-old Rickwood Field. The Braves wore the old "powder blue" uniforms like in the '80s. We arrived as soon as the park opened and were able to get pictures and autographs and talk to the players. Our seats were awesome. I had my picture taken with Matt Young, the Braves' outfielder and Southern League All-Star. Thanks to Matt and all the M-Braves!

CAITLIN BROWN
Jackson, Tenn.

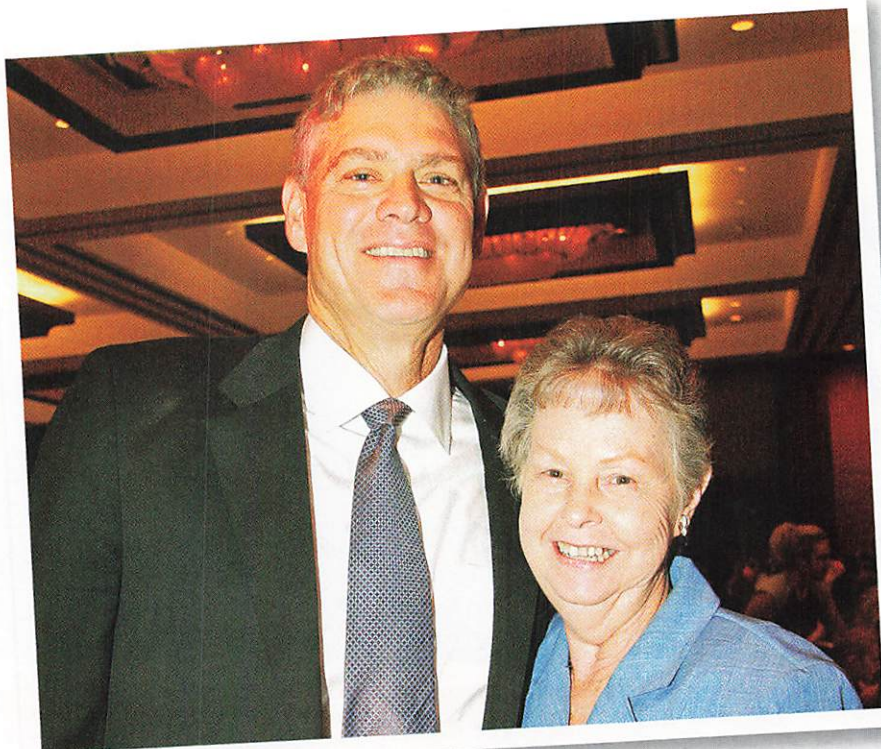


CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

LUNCH WITH THE STARS ✉

My family's been big Braves fans since 1966. It all started when my mom, Geraldine Fowler, got me watching them on TV when I was 9 years old because I wanted to learn how to play the game. We try to attend several games in Atlanta each season, and this year we were fortunate to be able to attend the Braves Hall of Fame luncheon for Greg Maddux and the game that evening. I am a huge Maddux fan, and we took my mother for her 70th birthday. As you can see, she was so excited to meet Dale Murphy, her all-time favorite player, and to have her picture taken with him. That was a very memorable day that we will never forget.

TERRY FOWLER
Summerville, S.C.



THE JONESES ✉

My name is Mary Ellen Jones, and I live in Lyons, Ga. I celebrated my third birthday with my mom and dad, Rhonda and D.J. Jones, watching our favorite Braves player - Chipper - at Turner Field Aug. 2.

LAMAR & FAYE JONES
Pierson, Fla.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER! ✉

WRITE TO US ✉

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P.O. Box 81247
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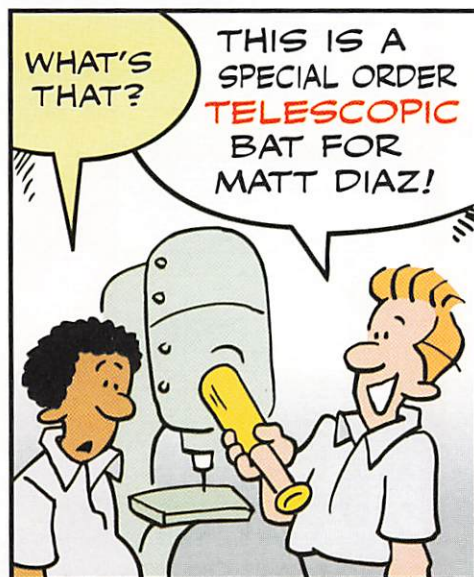
WRITE THE BRAVES ✉

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

BIG STICK



XTRA INNINGS

PAINTBALL WARS



Ready to do battle on the Paint Patrol are (Back row, from left): Brian McCann, Greg Norton, Peter Moylan, Matt Diaz, Buddy Carlyle, Tommy Hanson, Adam LaRoche, Brooks Conrad and Boone Logan, (kneeling from left) Reid Gorecki, Kris Medlen and Chipper Jones, (and front) Clint Sammons.

WHAT TO DO on a day off in Washington, D.C.? For 13 members of the Braves, the answer was obvious Sept. 24.

No. Not a tour of the Smithsonian. Instead they headed 45 minutes northwest of the city to Pev's Paintball Park, located in rural Aldie, Virginia. Billed as "the mid-Atlantic's premier paintball park," Pev's provided all the room and paint the Braves' paintball warriors needed for about four hours of fun.

The group split into two teams, one captained by Chipper Jones, the other by Greg Norton. Under Jones' command were Reid Gorecki, Boone Logan, Adam LaRoche, Brian McCann and Peter Moylan, while Norton captained Buddy Carlyle, Brooks Conrad, Matt Diaz, Tommy Hanson, Kris Medlen and Clint Sammons.

Though Chipper's team included three expert hunters - LaRoche, Logan and Jones - Norton's team won six out of nine games. Conrad was hailed as the "Paintball MVP."

The players competed on two courses at the 48-acre facility. One area was set up like an obstacle course, with large wooden spools, culverts, and barriers. The other course was built to resemble a town, giving the paintball battle an "urban warfare" dimension.

Days after the battles, Chipper said he was still getting over some of the aches and pains inflicted by the stinging paintballs, and Moylan said some of the bruises he received were vivid enough to be seen

through his tattoos - and that's saying something!

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

HANK'S CORNER

Hank Aaron received the Chairman's Award from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America at the organization's annual banquet Oct. 8 at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre in Atlanta. Aaron was recognized for the work done by his Chasing the Dream Foundation and was presented with a framed portrait of some of the children his foundation has assisted.

Another big event in Aaron's honor contin-



Hank Aaron, with his wife Billye, hold up the portrait given to him by the Boys & Girls Clubs in recognition of his Chasing the Dream Foundation.

ues to come together in Mobile, Ala., where he was born and raised. Baseball commissioner Bud Selig reportedly has accepted an invitation to attend the opening of the Hank Aaron Museum and Learning Center on April 14 in Mobile. Organizers plan to open the museum, located on the grounds of Hank Aaron Stadium, at 5 p.m. (Central), followed by ceremonies on the field for the BayBears' season-opener at 7:05.

Work continues in transforming Aaron's childhood home into a museum. The facility will include Aaron artifacts that have been donated by the National Baseball Hall of Fame, as well as by Aaron.

Visitors to the museum will see the front room of the house as it was when it was originally built in 1942. The family kitchen will include the original table, chairs and refrigerator. There will be a room for Aaron family artifacts and information; another room that features the start of Aaron's career, from Mobile to the Negro Leagues and the minors; another room will highlight Aaron's major league career; and yet another will spotlight his chase of Babe Ruth's career home run record of 714.

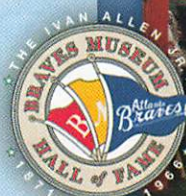
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2009	Oct. 19-31 Trick or Treat at Turner Field	Children 13 & under will fill a bag with Braves promotional items at different stops on the tour.
	Nov. 14 Free Admission Day	All fans will receive free admission on this day.
	Dec. 1-22 A Toy for A Tour	Children 13 & under who bring a new, unwrapped toy receive a complimentary tour of Turner Field.
2010	January Two for 10 in 2010	For the month of January, two people can take a tour of Turner Field for \$10
	February Black History Month	Children 13 & under who read a book about the Negro Leagues receive a complimentary tour.
	March Gearing Up for the 2010 Season	Adults who donate new or gently-used baseball equipment will receive 50% off adult admission to the museum and tours.

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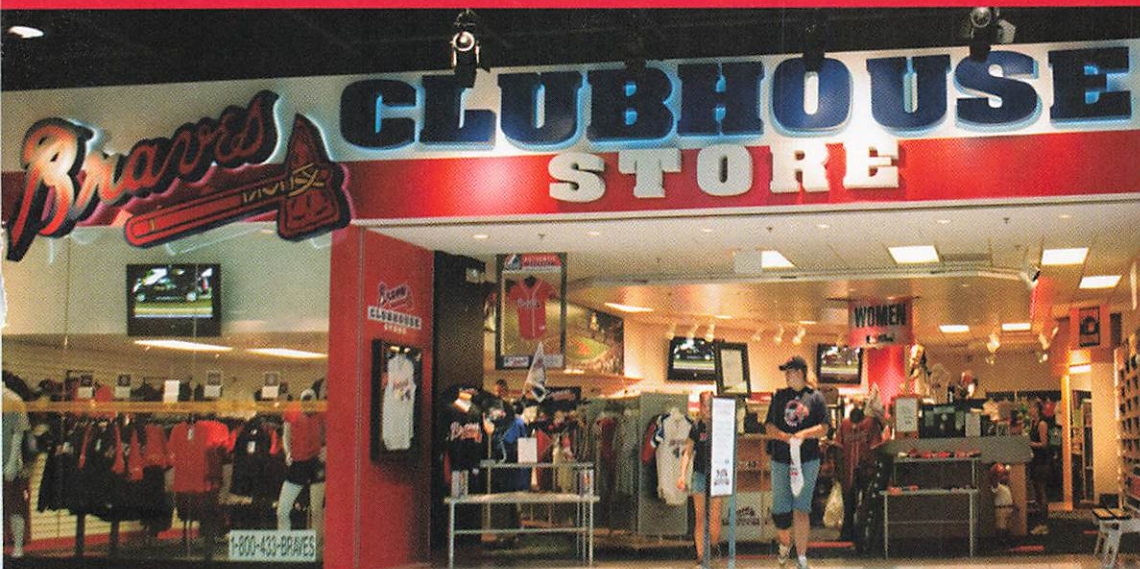
Call 800-433-BRAVES M-F 8:30 am-6:00 pm or visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center, 10 am to 6 pm daily



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